Readers and Writers

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Readers and Writers
(1917–1921)

by A. R. Orage

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Preface

UNDER the title of "Readers and Writers" and over the initials "R. H. C."—the "C" occasionally becoming "Congreve" for other purposes—I contributed to the *New Age,* during a period of seven or eight years, a weekly literary causerie of which the present volume, covering the years 1918–1921, is a partial reprint. My original design was to treat literary events from week to week with the continuity, consistency and policy ordinarily applied to comments on current political events; that is to say, with equal seriousness and from a similarly more or less fixed point of view as regards both means and end. This design involved of necessity a freedom of expression distinctly out of fashion, though it was the convention of the greatest period of English literature, namely, the Eighteenth Century; and its pursuits in consequence brought the comments themselves and the journal in which they appeared into somewhat lively disrepute. That, however, proved not to be the greatest difficulty. Indeed, within the last few years an almost general demand for more serious, more outspoken and even more "savage" criticism has been heard, and is perhaps on the way to being satisfied, though literary susceptibilities are still far from being as well-mannered as political susceptibilities. The greatest diffi-

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culty is encountered in the fact that literary events, unlike political events, occur with little apparent order, and are subject to no easily discoverable or demonstrable direction. In a single week every literary form and tendency may find itself illustrated, with the consequence that any attempt to set the week's doings in a relation of significant development is bound to fall under the suspicion of impressionism or arbitrariness. I have no other defence against these charges than Plato's appeal to good judges, of whom the best because the last is Time. Time, if ever it should condescend to re-consider the judgments contained herein, will pronounce upon them as only those living critics can whose present judgments are an anticipation of Time's. Time will show what has been right and what wrong. Already, moreover, a certain amount of winnowing and sifting has taken place. Some literary values of this moment are not what they were yesterday or the day before. A few are greater; many of them are less. And I think I can afford to look on most of the changes with equanimity. My most confident prediction, however, remains to be confirmed: it is that the perfect English style is still to be written. That it may be in our own time is both the goal and the guiding-star of all literary criticism that is not idle chatter.

A. R. Orage.

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READERS AND WRITERS

Fontenelle

There is a reason that Fontenelle has never before been translated into English. It is not that Mr. Ezra Pound, who has now translated a dozen of Fontenelle's dialogues, was the first to think of it. Many readers of the original have tried their hand at the translation only to discover that somehow or other Fontenelle would not "go" in English as he goes in French. The reason is not very far to seek. Fontenelle wrote a French peculiarly French, a good but an untranslatable French. He must, therefore, be left and read in the original if he is to be appreciated at his intrinsic value. Mr. Pound has made a rash attempt at the impossible in these dialogues, and he has achieved the unreadable through no further fault of his own. The result was foregone. The dialogues themselves in their English form are a little more dull than are the *Conversations* of Landor, which is to say that they are very dull indeed. Nothing at the first glance could be more attractive than dialogues between the great dead of the world. To every tyro the notion comes inevitably sooner or later, as if it were the idea for which the world were waiting. Nevertheless, on attempting it, the task is found to be beyond most human powers. Nobody has yet written a masterpiece in it. Fontenelle was not in any case the man to succeed in it from an English point of view. We English take the great

dead seriously. We expect them to converse paradisaically in paradise, and to be as much above their own living level as their living level was above that of ordinary men. Here, however, is a pretty task for a writer of dead dialogues, for he has not only to imitate the style, but to glorify both the matter and style of the greatest men of past ages. No wonder that he fails; no wonder that in the vast majority of cases he produces much the same impression of his heroes as is produced of them at spiritualistic séances. The attempt, however, will always continue to be made. It is a literary cactus-form that blooms every fifty years or so. As I calculate its periodicity, some one should shortly be producing a new series.

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Biography

Very few biographers have been anywhere near the level of mind of their subjects, and fewer still have been able to describe even what they have understood. The character of a great man is so complex that a genius for grasping essentials must be assumed in his perfect biographer: at the same time, it is so tedious in the analysis that the narrative must be condensed to represent it. Between the subtlety to be described, and the simplicity with which it must be described, the character of a man is likely to fall in his portrait into the distortion of over-elaboration or into the sketch. Though difficult, however, the art has been frequently

shown to be not impossible. We could not ask for a better portrait of Johnson than Boswell's. Lockhart's *Life of Scott* is as good as we desire it to be. Plato's *Socrates* is truer than life; and there are others. On the whole, the modern gossiping method is not likely to become popular in a cultured country.

***

The Responsibility of the Press

From his little brush with the Press, Dr. Lyttelton has come off badly. It was not because his case was bad, but because he had not the moral courage to stick to his guns. His case was that Parliament had practically ceased to be the leader of the nation, and that its place had been taken by the Press. Unfortunately, however, the Press had come to depend for its living upon sensationalism, with the consequence that its tendency was to prefer fiction to fact. A perfectly good case, I say, who know more of Fleet Street than Dr. Lyttelton will ever know. Every word of the indictment is well within the truth. But when challenged by the Press to substantiate his charges, Dr. Lyttelton, instead of inviting the world simply to *look* at the Press and to contrast its reports with facts, proceeded to exculpate the editors and to put the whole blame on the public. It is the public, he said, that is responsible, and there is no use in rating the editors, who merely supplied what the public wanted. But so long as public men adopt this cowardly attitude nothing can possi-

bly be done, for the "public," like a corporation, has neither a body to be kicked nor a soul to be damned. Relatively to the proprietors and editors of the Press the public consists of irresponsible individuals, who merely choose from among what is laid before them. They are mostly as innocent as children who deal at a tuck-shop, and, perchance, buy sweets and cakes that are bad for them as readily as things that are good for them. The responsible parties are the proprietors and editors, and, above them, the law. It is not an offence to buy articles at a shop that are illegally displayed for sale. The public supposition is that if they are on sale they can be bought. And, in fact, the Public Prosecutor, unlike Dr. Lyttelton, does not proceed against the purchasers of illegal articles, he proceeds against the vendors. In the case of our newspaper proprietors and editors the conditions of shopkeeping are parallel; they expose professed news and views for sale, with an implied guarantee that their goods are both good and fit for human consumption. The public cannot be expected to know which is which, or what is what, any more in the case of news and views than in the case of tea and potatoes. Rather less indeed, since the ill-effects of false news and unsound views are, as a rule, too long delayed and too subtle to be attributed to their proper causes. But the Press proprietors and editors know very well. They know whether the news they expose is true, or the views they vend are sound. They know also that in a large degree they are neither the one nor the other. Yet they continue to sell them, and even to expect public honours

for their fraudulent dealings. The excuses made for them are such as could be made for any other fraudulent industry; that it pays, that the public swallows it, that honesty would not pay, that the public does not want truth and sincerity, that the public must learn to discriminate for itself. Reduced to a simple statement, all these mean, in effect, that the Press is prepared to trade on the ignorance and folly of the public. So long as editors and proprietors are allowed to sail off from responsibility under the plea that they are only satisfying a public demand, so long will it be possible for purveyors of other forms of indecent literature and vendors of other articles of public ill-fare to complain that they are unfairly treated. There is likely to be always a demand for fiction against fact, the plausible lie against the honest truth, the doctored news against the plain statement, and the pleasing superficial against the strenuous profound. A change of taste in these respects could only be brought about by a determined effort in education extending over a generation and applied not only to schools, but to the Press, the pulpit, and to book-publishing. But because the preference now exists, and is a profitable taste to pander to, it is not right to acquit the Press that thrives on it.

***

Critics Beware

Mr. Crees, the author of a new study of George Meredith, has first pointed out one of the dangers in

writing about Meredith and then fallen into it. Everybody knows what it is; it is writing in epigram, or, as Mr. Crees calls it, "miscarrying with abortive epigram." That phrase alone should have warned Mr. Crees how near he was to ignoring his own counsel; but apparently he saw only the idea and not the fact, for a passage soon occurs in which he illustrates the danger perfectly. He is writing of the difficulty encountered by a certain kind of intellectual—Meredith, for example—in winning any public recognition; and this is the way he miscarries on:

> The idol of the future is the Aunt Sally of the present. The pioneer of intellect ploughs a lonely furrow. He is assailed by invective, beset by contumely, the butt of ridicule, the Saint Sebastian of the slings and arrows of outrageous criticism. He is depressed by disregard, chilled by the icy waters of contempt, haunted by the dread of beggary, the recompense of strictness of conviction. . . . And when detraction recites its palinode, his sole compensation is to reply (from the Elysian fields), "I told you so."

There are many untruths contained in this passage, some flattering and others not, to the "intellectual," and they are properly expressed—if untruths ever can be—in the style. The style is one in which the truth cannot be told; and it perfectly illustrates the axiom that critical writing cannot be too simple and unaffected. It is a common practice for a critic to approximate his style to the style of his subject; for example, to write about poetry poetically, about a "grand impassioned writer" in a grand and impassioned manner.

By so doing it is supposed that a critic shows his sympathy and his understanding of his subject. But the method is wrong. Criticism is not a fine art. The conversational tone is its proper medium, and it should be an absolute rule never to write in criticism what cannot be imagined as being easily said.

***

Henry James

The "Henry James Number" of the *Little Review* is devoted to essays by various hands upon the works and characteristics of the late novelist. The most interesting essay in the volume is one by Miss Ethel Coburn Mayne reporting the first appearance and subsequent development of Henry James as witnessed by the writers for the famous *Yellow Book,* of whom Miss Mayne was not the least characteristic. What a comedy of misunderstanding it all was, and how Henry James must have smiled about it! At the outset the *Yellow Book* writers had the distinct impression that Henry James was one of themselves; and they looked forward to exploiting the new worlds which he brought into their ken. But later on, to their disappointment, he fell away, receded from their visibility, and became, as Miss Mayne puts it, concerned less with the "world" than with the "drawing-room." The fault, however, was not with James, nor was the change in him. The *Yellow Book* too readily assumed that because James wrote in it, he was willing to be identified with the

tendency of the school; and they thought him lacking in loyalty when afterwards it appeared that he was powerfully hostile. But how could they have deceived themselves into supposing that a progress towards the ghostly could always keep step with a progress towards the fleshly? The two were worlds apart, and if for a single moment they coincided in an issue or two of the *Yellow Book,* their subsequent divergence was only made the more obvious. I, even I, who was still young when the *Yellow Book* began to appear, could have told its editors that Henry James was not long for their world. Between the method employed in, say, the *Death of the Lion* and the method of Henry Harland, Max Beerbohm, Miss Mayne herself, and, subsequently, Mr. D. H. Lawrence, there was, and could be, only an accidental and momentary sympathy. James was in love with the next world, or the next state of consciousness; he was always exploring the borderland between the conscious and the super-conscious. The *Yellow Book* writers were positively reactionary to him, for their borderland was not between men and angels, but between men and beasts. James's "contemptuous" word for Mr. D. H. Lawrence—which Miss Mayne still groans to think of—was the most natural and inevitable under the circumstances. It might have been foreseen from the moment Henry James put his pen into the *Yellow Book.* If there are any critics left who imagine that the *Yellow Book* was anything but a literary *cul de sac,* I commend to them this present essay by Miss Mayne.

Under the disguise of criticism of Henry James, it is a confession.

Henry James's *Middle Years* is a fragment of the autobiography begun some years before the author's death. We are told that this fragment was "dictated" by Henry James and that it was never revised by himself, both of which facts explain a little of the peculiarity of his style. If the style of the earlier books was mazy, the style of *Middle Years* is mazier. If the earlier style consisted of impressions impassionately conveyed, the present is more elusive still. Henry James was always difficult to pin down; in *Middle Years* his fluttering among words never rests a sentence. Nobody, I am convinced, who is not either a genuine devotee of Henry James or one of the paper-audience his friends cultivated for him, will succeed in reading through this work. An infinitely leisurely mind or an infinite interest in just Henry James's way of looking at things is necessary to the endurance of it. But given one of these, and in particular the latter, and the reading of *Middle Years* becomes an exhilarating exercise in sensing ghosts.

Yes, that is the phrase to describe what Henry James was always after. He was always after sensing ghosts. His habitat has been said to be the inter-space between the real and the ideal; but it can be more accurately defined as the inter-space between the dead and the living. You see his vision—almost his clairvoyance—actively engaged in this recovery of his

experiences years before as a young man in London. See how he revelled in them, rolling them off his tongue in long circling phrases. Is it not obvious that he is most at home in recollection, in the world of memory, in the inter-world, once more, of the dead and the living? Observe, too, how only a little more exaggeratedly anfractuous and swirling his style becomes—but not, in any real sense, different—under the influence of memory, than when professing to be describing the present. It is plain that memory differs for him from present vision only in being a little more vivid, a little more real. In order to see a thing clearly, he had, in fact, to make a memory of it, and the present tense of memory is impression. What I am trying to say is that Henry James mentalized phenomenon; hence that he saw most clearly in the world of memory where this process had been performed for him by time; and that he saw less clearly in our actual world because the phenomena herein resisted immediate mentalization. The difference for him was between the pre-digested and the to-be-digested; the former being the persons and events of memory, and the latter being the events and persons of his current experience.

Henry James will find himself very much at home with the discarnate minds who, it is presumed, are now his companions. Incarnation, embodiment, was for him a screen to be looked through, got over somehow, divined into, penetrated. He regarded it as a sort of magic curtain which concealed at the same time that under careful observation it revealed by its shadows

and movements the mind behind it. And I fancy I see him sitting before the actual sensible world of things and persons with infinite patience watching for a significant gesture or a revealing shadow. And such motions and shadows he recorded as impressions which became the stuff of his analysis and synthesis of the souls that originated them. But if that was his attitude towards the material world—and it is further proved by his occasional excursions into the completely ghostly—may we not safely conclude that in the world he now inhabits his sense of impressions is more at home still. For there, as I take it, the curtain is drawn, and minds and souls are by one degree the more exposed to direct vision. With his marvelous insight into the actual, what would Henry James not make of the mental and psychic when these are no longer concealed by the material? On the whole, nobody is likely to be happier "dead" than Henry James.

***

Turgenev

Both in Mr. Conrad's Introduction and Mr. Edward Garnett's critical study of Turgenev I observe the attitude of defence. They are defending rather than praising Turgenev. But Turgenev has been so long the victim of polemics that it is about time some judge summed up the contentions and delivered judgment. Neither Mr. Conrad nor Mr. Garnett, however, is qualified for this task by either temper or the power of judgment

itself. Mr. Conrad is a great writer, but he is not a great critic, and as for Mr. Garnett, he is not even a great writer; and the temper of both is shown in their common tendency to abuse not only the plaintiff's attorney but the jury as well. But there is no use in abusing the jury—in other words, the reading public of the world—even if some gain may be got by polemics with this or that critic. I am content to hear Mr. Maurice Baring and M. Haumont told that they are merely echoes of Russian partisanship and incapable of feeling the fine shades of "truth" in Turgenev; for both these writers are quite capable of hitting back. But when Mr. Conrad satirically remarks that Turgenev had qualities enough to ruin the prospects of any writer, and Mr. Garnett echoes *him* to the effect that Turgenev owes his "unpopularity" to "an exquisite feeling for balance" which nowadays is "less and less prized by modern opinion," I feel that the defence of Turgenev is exceeding the limits of discretion. For it is not by any means the case that the "unpopularity" of Turgenev is confined to the mob that has no feeling for balance or is jealous of his possession of too many qualities. Critics as good as Mr. Garnett and with no Russian political prejudices against Turgenev can come to the same conclusion as the innumerable anonymous gentlemen of the jury, to wit, that Turgenev was a great artist on a small scale whose faults were large. That is certainly my own case. While I agree (or affirm, for I am quite willing to take the initiative), that Turgenev's art is more exquisite, more humane, more European

than that of any other Russian writer, I must also maintain that in timidity of thought, in sentimentality, in occasional pettiness of mind, he is no more of a great writer than, let us say, Mr. Hall Caine. To compare the whole of him with the whole of Dostoievski is to realize in an instant the difference between a writer great in parts and a writer great even in his faults. Turgenev at his best is a European, I would rather say a Parisianized Russian; but Dostoievski, while wholly Russian, belongs to the world. An almost exact parallel is afforded by the case of Ibsen and Björnson, about whose respective values Norway used to dispute as now Mr. Garnett would have us dispute concerning the respective values of Dostoievski and Turgenev. The world has settled the first in favour of Ibsen—with Norway dissenting; the world will similarly settle the latter in favour of Dostoievski, with Mr. Garnett dissenting.

***

Plotinus

Plotinus, of whom Coleridge said that "no writer more wants, better deserves, or is less likely to obtain a new and more correct translation," has lately been translated into excellent English by Mr. Stephen Mackenna (*not* the author of *Sonia,* by the way). For all Coleridge's demand and Mr. Mackenna's supply, however, Plotinus is not likely to be read as much as he deserves. Abstract thought, or thinking in ideas with-

out images, is a painful pleasure, comparable to exercises designed and actually effective to physical health. There is no doubt whatever that mental power is increased by abstract thought. Abstract thinking is almost a recipe for the development of talent. But it is so distasteful to mental inertia and habit that even people who have experienced its immense profit are disinclined to persist in it. It was by reason of his persistence in an exercise peculiarly irksome to the Western mind that Plotinus approached the East more nearly in subtlety and purity of thought than all but a few Western thinkers before or after him. In reading him it is hard to say that one is not reading a clarified Shankara or a Vyasa of the Bhishma treatises of the *Mahabbarata.* East and West met in his mind.

Plotinus's aim, like that of all thinkers in the degree of their conception, is, in Coleridge's words, "the perfect spiritualization of all the laws of Nature into laws of intuition and intellect. It is the subsumption of phenomena in terms of personality, the reduction of Nature to the mind of man. Conversely it will be seen that the process may be said to personalize Nature; in other words, to assume the presence in natural phenomena of a kind of personal intelligence. If this be animism, I decline to be shocked by it on that account; for in that event the highest philosophy and one of the lowest forms of religion coincide, and there is no more to be said of it. The danger of this reasoning from mind to Nature and from Nature to mind is anthropomorphism. We tend to make Nature

in our own image, or, conversely, *á la* Nietzsche, to make ourselves after the image of Nature. But the greater the truth the greater is the peril of it; and thinkers must be on their guard to avoid the dangers, while nevertheless continuing the method. Plotinus certainly succeeded in avoiding the anthropomorphic no less than the crudely animistic dangers of his methods; but at the cost of remaining unintelligible to the majority of readers.

***

The New Europe

It should be possible before long to begin to discern some of the outlines of the new continent that will arise from the flood of the present war. That it will be a new continent is certain, and that it will contain as essential features some of the aspects of the Slav soul is probable. For what has been spiritually most apparent during the war has been the struggle of the Slav soul to find expression in the Western medium. Russia, we may say, has sought to Europeanize herself; or, rather, Russia has sought to impress upon Europe Russian ideas; with this further resemblance in her fate to the fate of the pioneers of every great new spiritual impulse, that she has been crucified in her mission. The crucifixion of Slavdom, however, is the sign in which Russian ideals—or, let us say Slav ideals—will in the end conquer. They will not submerge our Western ideals; the new continent will be

the old continent over again; but they will profoundly modify our former configurations, and compel us to draw our cultural maps afresh. In what respect, it may be asked, will our conceptions be radically changed? The reply is to be found confusedly in the events of the Russian Revolution; in the substitution of the pan-human for the national ideal, and in the attempt, this time to be made with all the strength at the disposal of intelligence, to create a single world-culture—a universal Church of men of good-sense and good-will. This appears to me to be the distinguishing feature of the new continent about to be formed; and we shall owe it to the Slavs.

***

The Fashion of Anti-Puritanism

The anti-Puritanism of the professed anti-Puritans is very little, if any, better than the Puritanism they oppose. The two parties divide the honours of our dislike fairly evenly between them. Puritanism is a fanatical devotion to a single aspect of virtue—namely, to morality. It assumes that Life is moral and nothing else; that Power, Wisdom, Truth, Beauty, and Love are all of no account in comparison with Goodness; and doing so it offends our judgment of the nature of Virtue, which is that Virtue is wholeness or a balance of all the aspects of God. Anti-Puritanism, on the other hand, denies all the affirmations of Puritanism,

but without affirming anything on its own account. It denies that Life is exclusively moral, but it does not affirm that Life is anything else; it destroys the false absolute of Puritan propagandas of Malthusianism and tacitly denying that there is any absolute whatsoever. This being the case, our choice between Puritanism and anti-Puritanism is between a false absolute and no absolute, between a one-sided truth and no truth at all. We are bound to be half-hearted upon either side, since the thing itself is only half a thing.

I am not likely to revise my opinions about virtue from the school of Marx and his disciple Kautsky. Marx was another flamen, a priest, that is to say, of one aspect only of reality—in this case the economic. That the moral cant of a particular age tends to represent the economic interest of the dominant class, is, of course, a truism; but there is a world of difference between moral cant and morality—and the latter is as uniform throughout the history as the former is variable. Moreover, it is not by any means always the case that the interests of the dominant class of capitalism are identical with Puritanism. The interests of capitalism today are decidedly with anti-Puritanism, in so far as the effects of anti-Puritanism are to break up family life, to restrict births and to cultivate eugenics. What could suit capitalism better than to atomize the last surviving natural grouping of individuals and to breed for the servile State? The anti-Puritan propagandas of Malthusianism and eu-

genics are not carried on, too, by Marxians, but by the wealthy classes. Because he is a shopkeeper, the Anglo-Saxon is today an anti-Puritan in these matters.

***

Popular Philosophy

The difficulty of popular philosophical discussion is not insuperable. It is all a matter of style. Mr. Bertrand Russell, for example, manages by means of an excellent style to make philosophy as easy to understand and as entrancing to follow as certain writers have made the equally difficult subject of economics. It is, in fact, the business of professional thinkers to popularize their subject and to procure for their Muse as many devotees as possible. In the case of Mr. Bertrand Russell, his admirable style has been put into the service of the most abominable philosophy ever formulated. He is an accidentalist of the most thorough-going kind who denies that life has any meaning or purpose. Life appeared, he says, by chance, and will disappear, probably for good, with the cooling of the sun; and he sings like a doomed cricket on a dissolving iceberg. But it is all the more strange in my judgment that a man who thinks thus can write as Mr. Russell writes. There is a contradiction somewhere between the simple richness of his style and the Spartan poverty of his ideas. He thinks glacially, but his style is warm. I suspect that if he were psychoanalysed Mr. Bertrand Russell would turn out to be

a walking contradiction. In a word, I don't believe he believes a word he says! That tone, that style, them there gestures—they betray the stage-player of the spirit.

A philosophy written in a popular style is not, of course, the same thing as a popular philosophy. "From a popular philosophy and a philosophical populace, good sense deliver us," said Coleridge, meaning to say that a philosophy whose substance and not whose expression only has been adapted to the populace is in all probability false and is certainly superficial. For in his *Lay Sermons,* published a hundred years ago, Coleridge supplemented the foregoing remark by deploring the "long and ominous eclipse of philosophy, the usurpation of that venerable name by physical and psychological empiricism, and the non-existence of a learned and philosophical *public.*" Between a philosophic public and a philosophic populace there is the same distinction as between the "public" that reads, let us say, Sedlak, and the "populace" that reads, let us say, Mr. H. G. Wells. Mr. Wells is a popular philosopher; but that is manifestly not the same thing as a writer who is trying to make philosophy popular.

***

Was Carlyle Prussian?

In the *International Journal of Ethics,* Mr. Herbert Stewart makes a chivalrous attempt to deliver Carlyle from the charge recently brought home to him of hav-

ing been a Prussian. Militarist Prussianism, he says, rests upon a postulate which would have filled Carlyle with horror, the postulate, namely, that an autocracy must be organized for war. I am not satisfied, however, that Carlyle would have been filled with anything but admiration. It is true that he did not adopt the Prussian error of identifying Might with Right. "Is Arithmetic," he asked, "a thing more fixed by the Eternal than the laws of justice are?" Could Justice or Right, therefore, be allowed to vary with the amount of Might at its disposal—a deduction inevitable from the Prussian hypothesis? On the other hand, Carlyle cannot be said to have been equally free from the more subtle error of Prussianism, the assumption that Might can be accumulated only by Right means. Might, he said in effect, being an attribute of God, can be obtained by man only as a result of some virtue. Hence its possession presumes the possession of a proportionate virtue, and a man of Might is to that extent a man of Right also. This subtlety led Carlyle into some strange company for the moral fanatic he was. It led him to glorify Frederick the Great and to condone Frederick's crime against Silesia. It led him to despise France and to defend West Indian slavery. Mr. Stewart must make his choice between Carlyle as a confused ethical philosopher and Carlyle as a Prussian. If he was not the latter, he was the former.

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Is Nietzsche for Germany?

Nietzsche we are told, is being read as never before in Germany. It is certain that Nietzsche was taken, if taken at all, in the wrong sense in Germany before the war. The Germans did with him precisely what the mob everywhere does with the satirist; they swallowed his praise and ignored his warnings. He is still, however, more of a danger than a saviour to post-war Germany, if only for the reason that his vocabulary is for the most part militarist. Culture is usually presented by Nietzsche in the term of combat, and the still small voice of perfection is only heard in the silences of his martial sentences. Now that Germany has begun to re-read Nietzsche, will it read him any more intelligently than before? Is not a critique of Nietzsche a necessary condition of safely reading him—in Germany? There are, undoubtedly, authors who are most dangerous to the nation in which they appear. Rousseau was particularly dangerous to France. Whitman is inimical to American culture. Dr. Johnson has been a blight upon English thought. And Nietzsche, it may well be, is only a blessing outside of Germany. Art and thought, it is commonly said, are beyond nationality and beyond race; and from this it follows that it is only a happy accident when a great writer or thinker is peculiarly suited to the nation in which he happens to be born. He is addressed to the world—why should his message be specially adapted to the language and people of his

parentage? A nation runs risks in accepting as its own the doctrines of the great men who chance to appear among it. Equally, a nation runs the risk of missing its real chosen unless it examines all the great men of the world. Chauvinism, either by choice or by exclusion, is always dangerous. We must take the good where we find it.

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Nietzsche in Fragments

The English mind is easily "put off" a subject, and particularly easily off a subject as uncongenial as Nietzsche; and it has been known to remain in this state for a century or more. Several of our own greatest thinkers and writers have had to wait a long period for their readers, and by the time that the English mind has recovered itself, they are often quite dead. It is likely to be the same with Nietzsche. Having the plausible excuse for being "off" Nietzsche which the war provided, the English intellectual classes —note that I do not say the intellectual English classes, for there are none—will continue to neglect Nietzsche until he has been superseded, as I believe he will be before very long. Psycho-analysis has taken a good deal of Nietzsche in its stride, and it is quite possible that the re-reading of Indian philosophy in the light of psycho-analysis will gather most of the remainder.

Nevertheless, the remaining fragments will be worth preserving, since indubitably they will be the fragments

of a giant of thought. As Heraclitus is represented by a small collection of aphorisms, each so concentrated that one would serve for an ordinary man's equipment for intellectual life, the Nietzsche of the future may be contained in a very small volume, chiefly of aphorisms. He aimed, he said, at saying in a sentence what other writers say in a book, and he characteristically added that he aimed at saying in a sentence what other writers did *not* say in a book. And he very often succeeded. These successes are his real contribution to his own immortality, and they will, I think, ensure it. I should advise Dr. Oscar Levy to prepare such a volume without delay. It may be the case that Nietzsche will be read in his entirety again, though I doubt it; but, in any event, such a volume as I have in mind would serve to either reintroduce him or handsomely to bury the mortal part of him.

I cannot believe that Nietzsche is about to be read, as never before, in Germany. Dr. Levy has assured us, on the report of a Berlin bookseller, that this was indicated in the sales of Nietzsche in Germany; but the wish was father to the deduction from the very small fact. Nietzsche was, before anything else, a great culture-hero; as a critic of art he has been surpassed by no man. But is there any appeal in culture to a Germany situated as Germany is today? I am here only a literary *causeur*. With the dinosaurs and other monsters of international politics I cannot be supposed to be on familiar terms. My opinion, nevertheless, based upon my own material, is that Germany

is most unlikely to resume the pursuit of culture where she interrupted it after 1870, or, indeed, to pursue culture at all. And the reason for my opinion is that Russia is too close at hand, too accessible, and, above all, too tempting to German cupidity. Think what the proximity to Germany—to a Germany headed off from the Western world—of a commercially succulent country like Russia really means. Germans are human, even if they are not sub-human, and the temptation of an El Dorado at their doors will prove to be more seductive than the cry from the muezzin to come to culture, come to culture. Nietzsche on the one side calling them to spiritual conquests will be met by the big bagmen calling them, on the other side, to commercial conquests. Who can doubt which appeal will be the stronger? Germany refused to attend to Nietzsche after 1870, when he spoke to them as one alive; they are less likely to listen to a voice from the dead after 1918. On second thoughts, I should advise Dr. Oscar Levy to publish his volume in Germany first. For there he would show by one satiric touch that no country needed it so much.

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The End of Fiction

Fiction nowadays, we are told, is not what it used to be. We are told that it is the modern university. It is certainly a very obliging medium. But on this

very account it is as delusive as it is obliging. It receives impressions easily, readily adapts itself to every kind of material, and assumes at the word of command any and every mood. But precisely because it does these things, the effects it produces are transient. Lightly come, lightly go; and if, as has been said, fiction is the modern reader's university, it is a school in which he learns everything and forgets everything. Modern as I am, and hopeful as I am of modernity, I cannot think that the predominance of fiction, even of such fiction as is written today, is a good sign; and when we see that it leads nowhere, that the people who read much of it never read anything else, and that it is an intellectual *cul-de-sac,* our alarm at the phenomenon is the greater. What kind of minds do we expect to develop on a diet of forty parts fiction to two of all other forms of literature? Assuming the free libraries to be the continuation schools of the public, what is their value if the only lessons taken in them are the lessons of fiction? I will not dwell on the obvious discouragement the figures are to every serious *writer*, for the effect on the readers must be worse.

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The Criteria of Culture

The suppression of the display of feeling, or, better, the control of the display of feeling, is the first condition of thought, and only those who have aimed at

writing with studied simplicity, studied lucidity, and studied detachment realize the amount of feeling that has to be trained to run quietly in harness. The modern failure (as compared with the success of the Greeks) to recognize feeling as an essential element of lucidity and the rest of the virtues of literary form is due to an excess of fiction. Just because fiction expresses everything it really impresses nothing. Its feeling evaporates as fast as it exudes. The sensation, nevertheless, is pleasant, for the reader appears to be witnessing genuine feeling genuinely expressing itself; and he fails to remember that what is true of a person is likely to be true of a book, that the more apparent, obvious, and demonstrated the feelings, the more superficial, unreal, and transient they probably are. As a matter of cold-blooded fact, it has been clearly shown during the course of the war that precisely our most "passionate" novelists have been our least patriotic citizens. I name no names, since they are known to everybody.

Culture I define as being, amongst other things, a capacity for subtle discrimination of words and ideas. Epictetus made the discrimination of words the foundation of moral training, and it is true enough that every stage of moral progress is indicated by the degree of our perception of the meaning of words. Tell me what words have a particular interest for you, and I will tell you what class of the world-school you are in. Tell me what certain words mean for you and I will tell you what you mean for the world of thought.

One of the most subtle words, and one of the key-words of culture, is simplicity. Can you discriminate between natural simplicity and studied simplicity, between Nature and Art? In appearance they are indistinguishable, but in reality they are æons apart; and whoever has learned to distinguish between them is entitled to regard himself as on the way to culture. Originality is another key-word, and its subtlety may be suggested by a paradox which was a common-place among the Greeks; namely, that the most original minds strive to conceal their originality, and that the master-minds succeed. Contrast this counsel of perfect originality with the counsels given in our own day, in which the aim of originality is directed to appearing original—you will be brought, thereby, face to face with still another key-idea of Culture, the relation of Appearance to Reality. All these exercises in culture are elementary, however, in comparison with the master-problem of disinterestedness. No word in the English language is more difficult to define or better worth attempting to define. Somewhere or other in its capacious folds it contains all the ideas of ethics, and even, I should say, of religion. The *Bhagavad Gita* (to name only one classic) can be summed up in the word. Duty is only a pale equivalent of it. I venture to say that whoever has understood the meaning of "disinterestedness" is not far off understanding the goal of human culture.

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The Fate of Sculpture

The art-critic of *The Times* having remarked that "the public hardly looks at the sculpture in the Academy, or outside it," Mr. John Tweed, an eminent sculptor himself, has now uttered a public lamentation in agreement with him. Sculpture today, he says, is an art without an audience; and he quotes a Belgian artist who told him what heroes our contemporary sculptors in this country must be to continue their work in the face of a unanimous neglect. It is not certain, however, that the sculptors of today do not thoroughly well deserve the fate to which they now find themselves condemned. In the economy of the arts, or, if this phrase be preferred, in the strategy of the æsthetics, nothing is more necessary from time to time in each of the arts than an iconoclast—by which I indicate not a destroyer simply, but a creator of new forms. Such a pioneer is of necessity a little rude to his immediate predecessors and to such of his contemporaries as are sheep. But in the end, nevertheless, if they will only accept and recognize him, he will revive their art for them. But in the case of sculpture the two such iconoclasts as have recently appeared—Mr. Epstein and the late Gaudier-Brzeska—were instantly set upon, not by the public, but by their contemporaries, and walled within a neglect far more complete than the neglect sculpture in general has received. Just when it appeared that they might be about to reawaken public interest in carven forms, the rest of the sculp-

tors hurried to silence them, with the consequence that at this moment there is literally nobody engaged in sculpture in whom the intelligent public takes the smallest interest. As sculptors have treated sculpture, so the public now treats sculptors. It is a pretty piece of karma.

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The Too Clever

Neglect means nothing very much; success is a matter of time for everything that is really classic. On the other hand, deliberately to incur neglect by writing for the few involves the further risk of more and more deserving it. Whoever makes a boast of writing for a coterie sooner or later finds himself writing for a coterie of a coterie, and at last for himself alone. It cannot be otherwise. As the progress of the classic is from the one to the many, the progress of the romantic is from the many to the one; and the more sincerely the latter is a romantic, the sooner he arrives at his journey's end. The involution of aim thus brought about is obvious already in the succession of works of the chief writers of the *Little Review.* They grow cleverer and cleverer, and, at the same time, more and more unintelligible. I am staggered by the cleverness of such a writer as Mr. Wyndham Lewis, and a little more so at the cleverness of Mr. James Joyce. But in the case of both of them, I find myself growing more and more mystified, bewildered,

and repelled. Is it, I ask, that they do not write for readers like me? Then their circle must be contracting, for I am one of many who used to read them with pleasure. And who are they gaining while losing us? Are their new readers more intensive if fewer, and better worth while for their quality than we were for our numbers? But I decline to allow the favourable answers. The fact is that the writers of the *Little Review* are getting too clever even for coterie, and will soon be read only by each other, or themselves.

A characteristic example is to be found in the opening chapter of Mr. James Joyce's new novel, *Ulysses*. This is how it begins:—

> Stately, plump Buck Milligan came from the stairway, bearing a bowl of lather on which a mirror and a razor lay crossed. A yellow dressing-gown, ungirdled, was sustained gently behind him on the mild morning air. He held the bowl aloft and intoned. . . .

Now it is clear that such a passage has not been written without a great deal of thought, and if thought were art, it might be called an artistic passage. But thought is not only not art, but the aim of art is to conceal thought. In its perfection art is indistinguishable from nature. The auspicious thoughtfulness of the passage I have quoted is, therefore, an objection to it; and the more so since it provokes an inspection it is unable to sustain. Challenged to "think" about what the writer is saying, the reader at once discovers that the passage will not bear thinking about. He asks, for instance, *whence* Buck Milligan came from

the staircase; *how* he managed to balance a crossed mirror and razor on a bowl's edge—and, particularly, while bearing them aloft; and what mild air it was that sustained the tails of a man's dressing-gown. To these questions deliberately provoked by the ostentatious care of the writer there is either no answer or none forthcoming without more thought than the detail is worth. The passage, in short, suffers from being aimed at a diminishing coterie; and it succeeds in satisfying, I imagine, only the writer of it who is alone in all its secrets. Mr. James Joyce had once the makings of a great writer—not a popular writer, but a classic writer. To become what he was he needed to be opened out, to be simplified, to conceal his cleverness, to write more and more for the world. But first in the *Egoist* and now in the *Little Review* he has been directed to cultivate his faults, his limitations, his swaddling clothes of genius, with the result that he is in imminent danger of brilliant provincialism.

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Homage to Propertius

Mr. Ezra Pound's *Homage to Propertius* has drawn an American Professor of Latin into the pages of the American magazine *Poetry*. Professor Hales is indignant at the attempt of Mr. Pound to make Propertius intelligible as well as merely accessible to the modern English reader, and in the name of Scholarship, he begs Mr. Pound to "lay aside the mask of

erudition" and to confess himself nothing better than a poet. With some of Professor Hales's literal criticisms it is impossible not to agree. Speaking in the name of the schools, he is frequently correct. But in the name of the humanities of life, of art, of literature, what in the world does it matter that Mr. Pound has spelled Punic with a capital when he meant a small letter, or that he has forgotten the existence of the Marcian aqueduct? Mr. Pound did not set out with the intention of making a literal translation of Propertius. He set out with the intention of creating in English verse a verse reincarnation, as it were, of Propertius, a "homage" to Propertius that should take the form of rendering him a contemporary of our own. And, secondly, all criticism based on the text of Propertius is invalid unless it is accompanied by a perception of the psychological quality of Propertius as he lived. But Professor Hales, it is clear, has no sense for this higher kind of criticism, for he complains that there is "no hint" in Propertius's text of "certain decadent meanings" which Mr. Pound attributes to him. Is there not, indeed? Accepting decadence in its modern American meaning, Propertius can only be said to be full of it. No literary critic, accustomed to reading through and between an author's lines, whether they be Latin, Greek, or English, can doubt the evidence of his trained senses that the mind behind the text of Propertius was a mind which the Latin Professor of the Chicago University would call decadent, if only it expressed itself in English. The facts that Propertius was a poet contemporary with Ovid, that

he wrote of the life of the luxurious Roman Empire, as one who habitually lived it, that he wrote of love and of his own adventures, are quite sufficient to prove that he was a child of his age; and if his age was, as it undoubtedly was, decadent, in a professorial sense, Propertius, we may be sure, shared its decadence. I am not saying, it will be observed, nor, I think, would Mr. Pound say, that to have shared in decadence and to be sympathetic to it are the same thing as to be decadent in oneself. What, in fact, distinguishes Propertius is his æsthetic reaction against decadence, against the very decadence in which he had been brought up, and with which he had sympathized. But this is not to admit that "no hint of certain decadent meanings" is to be found in him. On the contrary, he could not very well have become the æsthetic reaction against decadence without importing into his verse more than a hint of certain decadent meanings. In effect, Propertius is the compendium of the Roman Empire at its turning point in the best minds. Long before history with its slow sequence of events proved to the gross senses of mankind that Empire was a moral and æsthetic blunder, Propertius discovered the fact for himself and recorded his judgment in the æsthetic form of his exquisite verse. But he must have passed through decadence in order to have arrived at his final judgment; and, indeed, as I have said, his verse bears witness of it. Professor Hales has been misled by Propertius's reflections, by his habit of sublimating his experiences, by his criticism of decadence. But that reflection was only an accompaniment, or,

rather, sequel of Propertius's mode of life; it did not, any more than such reflection does today, make impossible or even improbable a mode of life in violent contrast with the reflection made upon it.

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Mr. Pound and Mr. Wyndham Lewis in Public

Mr. Ezra Pound has for some months been the "foreign" or exile editor of the *Little Review*; and I gather from the nature of the contributions that he has practically commandeered most of the space. A series of letters and some stories by Mr. Wyndham Lewis; letters, stories and verse, by Mr. Pound; ditto, ditto, ditto, by other—shall I say London?—writers—are evidence that Mr. Pound's office is no sinecure. He delivers the goods. The aim of the *Little Review*, as defined without the least attempt at camouflage by the editress (that is to say, the real American director of the venture), is to publish articles, stories, verses, and drawings of pure art—whatever that may be. It is not demanded of them that they shall be true—or false; that they shall have a meaning—single or double; that they shall be concerned with life—or fancy. Nothing, in fact, is asked of them but that they shall be art, just art. Less explicitly, but to the same effect, both Mr. Pound and Mr. Wyndham Lewis subscribe to the same formula. They, too, are after art, nothing but art. But in other respects they de-

fine themselves more clearly. From Mr. Wyndham Lewis, for instance, I gather that the aim of the *Little Review* artists is to differentiate themselves from the mob. Art would seem to consist, indeed, in this differentiation or self-separation. Whatever puts a gulf between yourself and the herd, and thus "distinguishes" you, is and must be art, because of this very effect. And Mr. Pound carries on the doctrine a stage by insisting that the only thing that matters about the mob is to deliver individuals from it. Art, in short, is the discovery, maintenance, and culture of individuals.

We have all heard of this doctrine; and there is no doubt that it is very seductive. But to whom? It has been remarked before that the appeal of Nietzsche has often been to the last persons in the world you would have thought capable of responding to him; or, let us say, to the last persons that ought to respond to him—weak-willed, moral imbeciles, with not enough intelligence to be even efficient slaves. These, as Nietzsche discovered, were only too often the sort of person that was attracted by his muscular doctrine of the Will to Power. It is the case likewise with the doctrine of individuality. Among its disciples there are, of course, the few who understand it; but the majority of them are precisely the persons who prove by their devotion their personal need of it. Individuality is for these as much a cult as health is a cult among the sick; and it is to be observed that they also have to take a good deal of care of themselves. They must never associate with the mob, they must be care-

ful what they eat in the way of æsthetics; they must pick and choose among people, places and things with all the delicacy of an egg-shell among potsherds. Above all, they must keep their art pure. Neither Mr. Wyndham Lewis nor Mr. Ezra Pound belongs to this class of æsthetic valetudinarians. Both are robust persons with excellent digestions, and with a great deal of substantial common sense. Nevertheless, both of them, to my mind, pose as invalids, and simulate all the whimperings and fastidiousness of the *malades imaginaires*. Read Mr. Lewis's letters, for example, in the issues of the *Little Review* here under notice. The writer is obviously a very clever man, with a good experience and judgment of life, and possessed of a powerful style. But he has chosen to exhibit himself as a clever gymnast of words, with innumerable finnicking fancies against this or that lest he should be confused with the "mob." And Mr. Pound is in much the same state. What is the need of it in their case, I ask? Unlike most of the other writers, neither Mr. Lewis nor Mr. Pound has any need to "cultivate" an individuality, or to surround it with walls and moats of poses. Neither has any need whatever to appear clever in order to be clever. On the contrary, both of them have need to do exactly the reverse—namely, to cut their too exuberant individuality down to the quick, and to reveal their cleverness by concealing it. Simplicity, as Oscar Wilde said—he, of course, only said it, he never really thought it—is the last refuge of complexity. And I put it to Mr. Lewis and Mr. Pound that with just a little more individuality, and

with just a little more cleverness, their ambition will be to be indistinguishable from the mob, either by their individuality or their cleverness. They will not succeed in it. Individuality and cleverness, like murder, will out. The aim, however, of the wise possessor of either, is to conceal it in subtler and subtler forms of common sense and simplicity.

Among the clever poses of this type of "stage player of the spirit," as Nietzsche called them, is the pose of the *enfant terrible*. They are mightily concerned to shock the bourgeoisie, and are never so happy as when they have said something naughty, and actually got it into print. Now it is, of course, very stupid for the bourgeoisie to be shocked. The bourgeoisie would be wiser to yawn. But it argues a similar kind of stupidity—anti-stupidity—to wish to shock them. But we do not wish to shock them, they say! We are indifferent to the existence of the bourgeoisie! Our aim is simply to write freely as artists, and to be at liberty to publish our work for such as can understand it. Publishing, however, is a public act; and I agree with the bourgeoisie that the art of an intimate circle or group is not of necessity a public art. Between private and public morality, personal and public policy, individual and communal art, there is all the difference of two differing scales of value. Queen Victoria did not wish to be addressed by Mr. Gladstone as if she were a public meeting. A public meeting does not like to be addressed as if it were a party of personal friends. The introduction of personal considerations into public policy is felt to be an intrusion; and to treat your

friends as if you were legislating on their behalf is an impertinence. From all this it follows that to thrust all private art into the public eye is to mix the two worlds. Only that part of private art that is in good public taste ought to be exhibited in public; the rest is for private, personal, individual consumption, and ought to be left unpublished, or circulated only privately. Let the artist write what pleases him; let him circulate it among his friends; the only criterion here is personal taste. But immediately he proposes to publish his work, he should ask himself the question: Is this in good public taste?

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Mr. Ezra Pound as Metricist

Under the title of *Ezra Pound: His Metric and Poetry,* a whole book—really, however, only an essay—has been devoted to the work of this literary enigma. For this honour, if honour it be, Mr. Pound is indebted more to what he has preached than to what he has practised; for on his actual achievement, considerable though it is, not even in America could anybody have been found to write a book. Mr. Pound will not deny that he is an American in this respect, if in none other, that he always likes to hitch his wagon to a star. He has always a ton of precept for a pound of example. And in America, more than in any other country save, perhaps, Germany, it appears to be required of a man that there shall be "significant"

intention, aim, theory—anything you like expressive of direction—in everything he does. There does not appear to me to be anything *very* original in the creation of poetic images, or even in the employment of irregular metric; neither of them can be said to constitute a new departure in poetic technique. Yet Mr. Pound has elevated each of them to be the star of a cult, with the consequence that we now have professed "schools" of poetry, calling themselves Imagist or Verslibrist. These are examples of what I mean in saying that Mr. Pound loves to hitch his wagon to a star.

It must be admitted that this habit of Mr. Pound has its good as well as its somewhat absurd side; there is only a step from the ridiculous to the sublime. It must also be affirmed, however it may reflect upon our English critics, that it is precisely the good side of Mr. Pound's technique which they usually condemn. For the good side consists of this, that all the poets who can claim to belong to the school of Mr. Pound must display in addition to the above-mentioned defects, the certain and positive merits of study of their art and deliberate craftsmanship. No poet dare claim to be a pupil of Mr. Pound who cannot prove that he has been to school to poetry, and submitted himself to a craft-apprenticeship; and no poet will long command Mr. Pound's approval who is not always learning and experimenting. Now this, which I call the good side of Mr. Pound's doctrine, is disliked in England, where it has for years been the habit of critics to pretend that poetry grows on bushes or in parsley-beds. That

poetry should be the practice of "a learned, self-conscious craft," to be carried on by a "guild of adepts," appears to Mr. Archer, for example, to be a heresy of the first order. How much of the best poetry, he exclaims, has been written with "little technical study behind it"; and how little necessary, therefore, any previous learning is. To the dogs with Mr. Pound's doctrine! Let the motto over the gates of the Temple of Poetry be: "No previous experience required." It will be seen, of course, how the confusion of Mr. Archer's mind has arisen. Because it is a fact that the "best" poetry looks effortless, he has fallen into the spectator's error of concluding that it is effortless. And because, again, a considerable part of the work of the "learned, self-conscious craftsmen" is pedantic and artificial, he has been confirmed in his error. The truth of the matter, however, is with Mr. Pound. Dangerous as it may be to require that a poet shall be learned in his profession, it is much more dangerous to deprecate his learning. By a happy fluke, it may be, a perfect poem may occasionally be written "without previous study"; from too much previous study there may also occasionally result only verse smelling of the lamp; but in the long run, and for the cultivation of poetry as an art, there is no doubt that the most fruitful way is the way of the craftsman and the adept.

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Mr. Ezra Pound on Religion

Mr. Pound has been called over the coals for his impolite dismissal of Mr. G. K. Chesterton as a danger to English literature. But, good gracious, Mr. G. K. Chesterton's reputation is not so frail that it cannot take care of itself against a spirited idiosyncrasy. Mr. Pound has expressed his honest opinion; but what is discussion for but to elicit honest opinions, and then to extract the truth from them? There is undoubtedly a fragment of truth in Mr. Pound's view of Mr. G. K. Chesterton's influence, and it is this: that Mr. Chesterton is a most dangerous man to imitate. His imitators become apes. But that is not to say that Mr. Chesterton is not himself a great writer. Shakespeare is likewise a dangerous man to imitate; and we should only be repeating good criticism if we affirmed that the influence of Shakespeare upon English style has been on the whole bad. But this is not to detract from the greatness of Shakespeare. Every writer of a unique style is liable to ruin his imitators; and, from this point of view, the wise thing to be done is to classify good writers as writers to be imitated and writers never to be imitated. Among the former are the writers whom personally I prefer; for I love best the men of the eighteenth century, who aimed at writing as nearly as possible like the world, and through whom the common genius of the English language spoke. But there is pleasure and profit also in the highly individualized styles of the latter sort of writers,

beginning, let us say, with *Euphues,* and represented today by Mr. G. K. Chesterton. Mr. Pound may have no fancy for the unique and personally invented style of Mr. Chesterton, but it is a matter entirely of taste and not of judgment. Should he announce that he cannot tolerate Swift or Burke or Sterne, writers of pure English, then, indeed, I should join in deploring his judgment. As it is, I listen to his remarks on Mr. Chesterton as I should hear his opinions of crab-soup.

Coming to his views upon religion and upon Christianity, I find myself not so much hostile to Mr. Pound as bewildered by him; and yet not bewildered to the degree of much curiosity. Certain critical views of religion are stimulating. Nietzsche's, for example, or Huxley's, or W. K. Clifford's, or even Frazer's. You feel they come from minds serious enough to take religion seriously, and that they are expressive rather of impatience with the superficiality of current religion than of hostility to religion itself. Nietzsche and the rest, in fact, were not critical of religion and of Christianity, because they were themselves indifferent to religion, but because they were too intensely concerned with the religious problem to accept the popular solutions. Mr. Pound, on the other hand, does not appear to me to be a serious thinker on the subject. He dismisses the current popular solutions not only as if they were, as they mostly are, superficial and absurd, but as if the problems of conscience, the soul, sin, and of salvation, to which these solutions are trial replies, were non-existent or trivial. It is his indifference to the reality of the problems, and not his

criticism of the popular solutions, that keeps my mind at a distance from Mr. Pound's when he is writing on religion. He does not so much as even irritate me, he simply leaves me as indifferent to his opinions as he is himself.

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Mr. Pound, Caricaturist

Mr. Ezra Pound comes in for it again—as he always does. His idiosyncrasies are the enemies of his personality, and they will always, unless he can amend them, militate against both his work and his success. Mr. Pound appears to love to give his readers the impression that he is no end of a fire-eater, and that he is a charlatan of the first-water, setting up to lecture better men on the virtues he himself has never cultivated. It is an absolutely incorrect picture, an exceedingly bad self-portrait, a malicious caricature of himself. A psycho-analyst would attribute it all to "compensation," to an attempt on the part of Mr. Pound to disguise his qualities as defects. In brief, Mr. Pound has not the courage of his virtues. "No one," says Mr. Hartley in the *Little Review,* "admires Ezra Pound more than I do . . . but it is his celestial sneer I admire." A sneer, celestial or mundane, is, however, the last gesture of which Mr. Pound is capable. If anything, he is too benignant, too enthusiastic, too anxious to find excuse for admiration.

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The Admirable Victorians

I am prepared to apologize if I have ever used "Victorian" in a derogatory sense. But I know I have not. I have too deep a respect for the Victorian character ever to make light of it, and especially for my own generation, that can afford to laugh at so little. Mr. Strachey's "brilliant" essays, therefore, leave me laughing at him rather than with him. One is compelled to take him personally, and to turn the tables upon Mr. Strachey with the *argumentum ad hominem*. How do you compare with the people you write about? For it is the peculiarity of the Victorians—our grandfathers and great-grandfathers—that whatever we may feel about them in our current opinions, some one has only to sneer at them to provoke us to their defence; and what better defence can they ask than to be compared, man for man, with their critics? As a set-off to the "brilliant" essays of Mr. Strachey—how easy it is to be brilliant nowadays! I have recently read, on the loan of his great-grandson, the privately printed personal memoir of Wm. Mattingly Soundy, who died in 1862, at the full age of 96. For 24 years he was a member of his local Congregational church, and for 46 years he was deacon. During nearly the whole of that time he never missed a meeting, Sunday or week-day, and was never known to be late, though he lived two miles from the church. It is the round of a machine, you may say, and there is no

wonder that the age was mechanical. But I think of the passionate mainspring that kept a "machine" going for so long without a psychological breakdown. What an intensity it must have had! What a character! If to love it is impossible, it is impossible not to admire it; and since we truly live by admiration, hope and love, it is something for the Victorians that they can still fill us with admiration. My own generation (now past as a force) has provided the soul of the world with nothing so fine.

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French Clarté

M. Vannier's *La Clarté Française* does not throw much light upon the mysteries of French lucidity. He accepts as self-evident Rivarol's axiom that "what is not clear is not French"—surely worthy to be the national device of France; and he analyses with admirable humour a considerable number of examples of "clarté," and the want of it. But the mystery of lucidity remains a mystery still. Flaubert's practice of reading his compositions aloud puts us on the most promising scent, for it is certain that the French "clarté" is eminently readable aloud and in company. A great deal of our own literature is meant for the eye and not for the ear, for the study and not for the salon, with the consequence that at its best it is the grand style simple, but at its worst shocking. Written

for the ear, and meant to be read in company, French literature is never grand, but neither is it ever silly. Its range is society, while ours is solitude.

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When Shall We Translate?

There is nothing particularly "masterly" from the modern English point of view in Hobbes's translation of Pericles's *Funeral Oration.* His period of English prose appears to have been ill-adapted for the translation of the Greek idiom of the time of Pericles. To the usual cautions against translations in general, we ought to add the caution against translations made in dissimilar epochs. It is not at any time in the history of a language that a translation from a foreign language can safely be undertaken. In all probability, indeed, the proper period for translation is no longer in point of time, than the period within which the original itself was written. If the Periclean Age lasted, let us say, fifty years, it is within a period in English history of the same length that an adequate translation can be made. Once let that period go by, and a perfect translation will be for ever impossible. And equally the result will be a failure, if the translation is attempted before its time has come. I do not think that the Hobbesian period of English was in key with the period of Periclean Greek; nor, again, do I think that our period for perfect translation has yet come. A "masterpiece" of translation of Pericles's

Oration is still, in my opinion, to be done. But I am confident that we are approaching the proper period, and in proof of this I would remark on the superiority of Jowett's translation over that of Hobbes. Jowett, as a writer of original English, nobody, I think, would compare with Hobbes of Malmesbury. Hobbes was a great pioneer, a creator of language; Jowett was only a good writer. Nevertheless, the idiom in which Jowett wrote, was more nearly perfect (that is, fully developed) English than the idiom in which Hobbes wrote. And since, in point of development, the correspondence between Periclean Greek and Jowett's English, is closer than the correspondence between Periclean Greek and Hobbes's English, Jowett's translation is nearer the original than Hobbes's.

It would be a pleasant exercise in style to criticize Jowett's translation, and a still more profitable exercise to amend it. To a mere student of comparative values in Periclean Greek and idiomatic English, some of the errors in Jowett's translation are obvious. Such a student needs not to refer with the scholar's precision to the original Greek to be able, with the approval of all men of taste, to pronounce that such and such a phrase or word is most certainly not what may be called Periclean *English.* It stands to the totality of reason that it is not so. We may be certain, for instance, that Pericles, were he delivering his *Oration* in English, with all the taste and training he possessed as a Greek of his age, would never have employed such phrases as these: "commended the law-giver,"

"a worthy thing," "burial to the dead," "reputation . . . imperilled on . . . the eloquence," "who knows the facts," "suspect exaggeration." Pericles, we cannot but suppose, both from the man and his age, spoke with studied simplicity, that is to say, with perfect naturalness. The words and phrases he used were in all probability the most ordinary to the ear of the Athenian, and well within the limits of serious conversation. But such phrases as I have mentioned are not of the same English character; they are written, not spoken phrases, and approximate more to a leading commemorative article in *The Times* than to a speech we should all regard as excellent. It would be interesting to have Lord Rosebery's version of Pericles' speech, or even Mr. Asquith's. Both, it is probable, would be nearer the original than Jowett's, though still some distance off perfection. In another fifty years perfection will be reached.

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Nature in Mind

The *Quest* contains an article by Mr. G. R. S. Mead, in which he suggests—and, perhaps, rather more than suggests—an affinity, if not an identity, between the "laws" of nature and the "laws" of mind. Ever since I read the following sentence in Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*: "The highest perception of natural philosophy would consist in the perfect spiritualization of all the laws of nature into laws of intuition and intellect,"

it has been at the back of my mind as an aim to keep before philosophy. Whether or not there is a drummer in every age with whom the active thinkers keep in step, even without being aware of the fact, I can only say that more and more evidence of this tendency of thought is coming to light. Boutroux's *Contingency of the Laws of Nature* may be said to have most explicitly attempted the sublimation—or, dare we say, the humanization?—of the natural laws; but Boutroux is only one of many philosophers working in the same direction. Other areas of study than that of "pure" philosophy, seem to have yielded, or to be yielding, the same result. Mr. Mead quotes, for instance, some recent studies of Animism to show that Animism, which, together with Anthropomorphism, we used to dismiss as merely a primitive mode of thought, may, after all, prove to contain a truth, the truth, namely, that Nature *is* living and intelligent, and, on that account, not so far from human nature as we had come to imagine. "The more we penetrate Matter," says Mr. Mead, "the more akin to Mind we find it to be." The world is a creation of mind; and the more either of the world or of mind we understand the more we understand of both. It is a thrilling idea, the conception of the world of nature as being the externalization of an intelligence akin to our own. At the same time, it is, like all thrilling ideas, associated with considerable danger. The "superstitions" connected with it are perhaps best left under the shadow that has been cast upon them.

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Mr. Clive Bell's Pot

Mr. Clive Bell cannot escape the charge of literary insolence by giving to his collection of essays the deprecatory name of *Pot Boilers*. That the articles he has reprinted were designed to boil Mr. Clive Bell's pot, and did, in fact, keep it simmering, may be true enough; for the *Athenæum*, in which most of them appeared, was an eclectic journal with a surprising taste for the bad as well as for the good. Mr. Clive Bell's modesty, however, is titular only, for not merely has he published these ashes of his yesterday's fire, but he imagines them to be still ablaze. "It charms me," he says, "to notice as I read these essays, with what care and conscience they are done. . . . I seem consistently to have cared much for four things—Art, Truth, Liberty, and Peace." These are things which a more modest man would have left his biographer and eulogist to say of him; and even then not even friendship would have made them true. To Art and Truth, there are, of course, a good many references in Mr. Clive Bell's essays, but the mere mention of these names ought not to be regarded as an evidence of care for the things themselves. Cannot the names of Art and Truth be also taken in vain? In the two concluding essays of the book are to be found most clearly Mr. Clive Bell's conception of Art. It is indistinguishable from what may be called the Bohemian conception. Art is not moral, art is not useful, art is not a relative fact; it is an absolute to which all these other things are relative. The artist, again, is not a

"practical" person, and it is no use expecting of him an interest in the non-artistic affairs of the world. The war, for instance? It is only a means to art, and what should be said of artists who abandon the end to occupy themselves with the means?

But this Bohemian and superior attitude is consistent apparently with some very mundane bitterness. Mr. Clive Bell does not appreciate the war, which appears to have put him considerably out, in spite of his Kensington Olympianism. He is shocked at hearing that "this is no time for art." But, on the other hand, he does not appear to be able to escape from the war. The penultimate essay is about *Art and the War,* and the first essay is a palinode for the state of affairs to which the war put an end. According to Mr. Clive Bell, the world before the war was in a most promising condition of renaissance—of æsthetic renaissance. "Our governing classes," he says, "were drifting out of barbarism. . . . 'Society' was becoming open-minded, tired of being merely decent, and was beginning to prefer the 'clever' to the 'good.'" But with the war all this was interrupted—probably never to be resumed; for what is the use of attempting to establish an æsthetic culture upon the state of poverty which will certainly ensue after the war? Poverty and art, he as nearly as possible says, are incompatible; it is only by means of wealth, wealth in superabundance, that art is possible. And since war is destructive of wealth, "war has ruined our little patch of civility" without bringing us anything in exchange for it. The Bohemian view of art is own brother to the Sardana-

palian view of culture in general; it presupposes great wealth, while denying that art is a luxury. Art is not a luxury or an elegant amenity added to life, says Mr. Clive Bell. At the same time, it is only when Society is wealthy that art can flourish. The contradiction is obvious, and it pervades Mr. Clive Bell's work. It is not worth dwelling on a moment.

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The Criticism of Poets

Professor Rudmose-Brown, the author of *French Literary Studies,* is under the fatal illusion that it is necessary (or, at any rate, proper), to write about poetry poetically; and his comments are too often in this style: "The illimitable night of his obscurity is strewn with innumerable stars." But it is a style which is not only repellent in itself, but doubly repellent from its association with an exposition of poetry. Dr. Johnson has written about poetry in the proper style. He was respectful in the very distance his prose kept from poetic imagery. Cold and detached he may have seemed to be, but all good criticism, comment, and even appreciation labour of necessity under this charge. What would be said of a judge who demonstrated the emotions of the persons before him; or, equally, of a judge who did not feel them? To be a critic or judge of poetry, or of any art, requires, in the first instance, an intense sympathetic power; but, in the second instance, a powerful self-restraint in ex-

pression, manifested in poetical criticism, I should say, by a prose style free from the smallest suggestion of poetry.

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"John Eglinton."

Mr. "John Eglinton" has been called "the Irish Emerson"; but the description of the "Irish Thoreau" would fit him much better. He is transcendental, like Emerson, but after a different, and a less high-falutin' manner—the manner of transcendental common sense. On the other hand, he shares with Thoreau the quality of passionate independence, and what may be called adventurous solitude. "John Eglinton" names his essays *Anglo-Irish,* and they answer even more accurately to the description than the compound implies; for they are essays upon the hyphen that joins them. Exactly as Thoreau was most completely at home in no other man's land between the world and the wood, "John Eglinton" is at his easiest somewhere between England and Ireland. He is not Irish, nor is he English. He is not Anglo-Irish either; but, once more, the hyphen between them. It is this sense of difference from both elements that makes of "John Eglinton" at once so attractive, so significant, and so illuminating a writer and thinker. Being between two worlds, and with a foot in each, he understands each world in a double sense, from within and from without. To each in turn he can be both interpreter and critic; and

in these delightful essays he is to be found alternately defending and attacking each of the national elements between which his perch is placed. "Candid friend" would, perhaps, be a fair description of his attitude towards both nations, if the phrase were not associated with the disagreeable. But since "John Eglinton" is anything but acid in his comments, and writes of both nations in a spirit of mingled admiration and judgment, I can think of nothing better at the moment than my image of the hyphen. He is alone between two worlds, friendly but critical equally of both.

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Irish Humour

Mr. Stephen Gwynn's *Irish Books and Irish People* contains an essay on "Irish Humour." Mr. Gwynn is severe but just. He refers to the "damning effects" of the "easy fluency of wit" and the "careless spontaneity of laughter" which characterize Irish humour. It would be terrible, however, to have to admit that these divine qualities are "defects" in the accepted sense of qualities *manques*; and the "defect" arises, I think, not from the presence of these qualities in the Irish genius, but from the absence of the counterbalancing qualities of weight, high seriousness, and good judgment. It would almost seem that the "elder gods" departed from Ireland centuries ago, leaving in sole possession the "younger gods" of irresponsible and incontinent laughter. As Mr. Gwynn says, "Irish

humour makes you laugh"; it always takes one by surprise. But the laughter has no echoes in the deeper levels of consciousness; it rings true but shallow. Dogmatism on racial psychology is dangerous, and I have no wish to exacerbate feelings, already too sore; but, as a literary critic, I venture my judgment that the Irish genius, as manifested in literature during the last century, is wanting in the solidity that comes only from hard work. Every Irishman, speaking roughly, is a born genius; but few Irishmen complete their birth by "making" themselves. Wit comes to them too easily to be anything but a tempting line of least resistance.

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The Literary Drama of Ireland

While exceedingly painstaking, thorough, and well-documented, Mr. Boyd's essay on *The Contemporary Drama of Ireland* cannot be said to add much value to the value of a record. Unlike his recent volume of *Appreciations and Depreciations,* his present work carefully, and I should almost say, timidly, avoids coming to any large and personal conclusions, save in the case, perhaps, of the plays of Mr. St. John Ervine. The reason for this diffidence I take to be rather an apprehension of what he might discover where his real conclusions might prove to be than any inability to arrive at them; for I cannot think that upon any other ground so usually decisive a mind would have been content to leave his readers in the dark. But what

then is it that Mr. Boyd may conceivably have feared to discover? It is obvious enough, I think, to an outsider—to one, I mean, who does not belong to the coterie that calls itself the Irish literary movement; it is that the contemporary drama of Ireland is the history of a rapid decline.

Mr. Boyd is, of course, honest with his facts, and the material is thus before us for a judgment. He does not conceal from us, for instance, the illuminating circumstances that the Irish dramatic movement actually began under the impulse of the Continental movement, and that its earliest authors were desirous, not so much of creating an Irish drama, as of creating a drama for Ireland. Mr. Edward Martyn, who was undoubtedly the chief pioneer, was himself a follower of Ibsen and aimed at writing and producing what may be called Ibsen plays. But this praiseworthy attempt to reintroduce the world into Ireland was defeated by the apparently incorrigible tendency of the native Irish mind to reduce the world to the size of Dublin. In rather less than two years, during which time some six or seven plays were produced, the Irish Literary Theatre, founded by Martyn and Yeats, came to an end, to have its place taken almost immediately by the Irish *National* Theatre, which was formed about the groups of Irish players calling themselves the Irish National Drama Society. But what has been the consequence of this contraction of aim and of interest? That plays of some value as folk-drama have resulted from it nobody would deny; but equally nobody would maintain that the world has been en-

riched by it in its dramatic literature. Ireland, in other words, has accepted a gift from the world without returning it; her literary coterie has taken the inspiration of the Continent and converted it to a purely nationalist use.

Even against this there would be nothing to be said if it succeeded; but fortunately for the world-principle it can be shown that such a procedure ends in sterility. As the reader turns over the pages of Mr. Boyd's faithful record of the course of the drama in Ireland, he cannot but be aware of a gradual obscuration. One by one the lamps lit by Martyn, Moore, and others, which illuminate the earlier pages, go out, leaving the reader in the later pages groping his way through petty controversies acid with personality, and through an interminable undergrowth of sickly and stunted productions about which even Mr. Boyd grows impatient. The vision splendid with which the record begins dies down to a twilight, to a darkness, and finally to black night. The world has once more been shut out.

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Mr. Standish O'Grady

Mr. Standish O'Grady's *The Flight of the Eagle* is not a romance in the ordinary sense; it is not an invented story, but an actual historical episode treated romantically. The period is Elizabethan, and the story turns mainly on the careers of Sir William

Parrett, an English "Lord-Lieutenant" of Ireland, who appears to have suffered the usual fate of a popular English Governor, and Red Hugh O'Donnell or Hue Roe of Tir-Connall, which is now Donegal. If acquaintance with Irish history is ever to be made by English readers, the means must be romances of this kind. History proper is, as a rule, carefully ignored by the average reader, who must therefore have facts, if he is ever to have them, presented in the form of a story. It is only by this means, and thanks to Scott in the first instance, that the history of Scotland has penetrated in any degree beyond the border. Only by this means, again, have various countries and nations been brought home to the intellectually idle English reader by writers like Kipling. Both as a story-writer and as the first and greatest of the Irish historians of Ireland, Mr. Standish O'Grady is qualified to do for Ireland what Scott after his own fashion has done for Scotland, namely, bring his country into the historic consciousness of the world.

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Mr. Standish O'Grady, Enchanter

The Selected Essays and Passages from Standish O'Grady is a priceless anthology of this neglected author. Very few people in England realize that Mr. Standish O'Grady is more than any other Irishman the rediscoverer of ancient and, in consequence, the

creator of modern Ireland. His very first work on the *Heroic Period* of Irish history appeared in 1878; it was published at his own expense, and had a small and a slow sale; but today it is the inspiration of the Celtic revival. "Legends," says Mr. O'Grady, "are the kind of history which a nation desires to possess." For the same reason, legends are the kind of history which a nation tends to produce. I am not certain that it would not have been well to leave the legends of ancient Ireland in their dust and oblivion. They go back to remote periods in time, and seem, even then, to echo still earlier ages. It is possible, for instance, that Ireland was a nation over four thousand years ago. Some contend that a Buddhist civilization preceded the Christian. Characteristically, it has been thought that Ireland supported Carthage against Rome. But what is the present value of these revivals of infantile memories? They cannot be realized today, and to dwell upon them is to run the risk of a psychic regression from waking to dreaming. "Enchantment," Mr. O'Grady tells us, "is a fact in nature." So potent a charm as himself has created may have been responsible—who dare say?—for the recall to present-day Irish consciousness, of early historic experience that were best forgotten. Is it not a fact that the mood of Ireland today is between the legendary and the dreaming? Is not the "ideal" Irishman today Cuculain of Dundalk talking and acting in his sleep? It is a question for psycho-analysis.

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Les Sentiments de Julien Benda

I thought for some time of translating *Les Sentiments de Critias,* recently published in Paris by M. Julien Benda. The style is excellent, and M. Benda has the gifts of epigram and irony; but, upon second thoughts, the inappositeness of such a style to the situation in which we find ourselves forbade me. As M. Benda himself says, "there is no elegance about the war." And success in writing about it elegantly must needs, therefore, be a literary failure. Critias's "sentiments" moreover, appear, when compared with the real sentiments evoked by the contemplation of the war, a little literary. He is like a sadder and a wiser Mr. Bernard Shaw flickering epigrammatically over the carnage. Impeccable as his opinions usually are, they are expressed too lightly to be impressive, and too carefully to be regarded as wholly natural. And that M. Benda can do no other is evident in his *Open Letter to M. Romain Rolland,* whom he considers a prig. If he had been capable of impassioned rhetoric it is in this address that he would have shown his skill, for the subject is to his liking, and the material for an indictment is ample. But the most striking sentence he achieves is that "We asked for judgment and you gave us a sermon." It is pretty, but it is "art."

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Convalescence After Newspaper

Matthew Arnold used to say that to get his feet wet spoiled his style for days. But there is a far worse enemy of style than natural damp; it is too much newspaper-reading. Too much newspaper not only spoils one's style, it takes off the edge of one's taste, so that I know not what grindstones are necessary to put it on again. Indulgent readers, I have been compelled for some weeks to read too much newspaper, with the consequence that at the end of my task I was not only certain that my little of style was gone, but I was indifferent in my taste. The explanation of the *reductio ad absurdum* to which an overdose of newspaper leads is to be found, I think, in the uniformity mass and collectivity of newspaper literature. The writing that fills the Press is neither individual nor does it aim at individuality. If a citizen's meeting, a jury, or the House of Commons were to perform the feat of making its voice heard, the style of their oracles would be perfect newspaper. But literature, I need not say, is not made after this fashion; nor is it inspired by such performances. Literature, like all art, is above everything, individual expression. *Gardez-vous!* I do not mean that literature is a personal expression of the personal opinion of the writer. On the contrary, it is the rôle of newspaper to give common expression to personal opinions, but it is the function of literature to give personal expression to common opinions. And since it is only personal expression that provokes and

inspires personal expression, from newspapers one can derive no stimulus to literature, but only the opposite, a disrelish and a distaste.

How to recover one's health after newspaper poisoning is a problem. To plunge back forthwith into books was for me an impossibility. It was necessary to begin again from the very beginning and gradually to accustom myself to the taste for literature again. Re-arranging my books, and throwing away the certainly-done with was, I found, as useful a preliminary tonic as any other I could devise. In particular there is a satisfaction in throwing out books which makes this medicine as pleasant as it is tonic. It visibly reduces the amount left to be read; there is then not so much on one's plate that the appetite revolts at the prospect. And who can throw away a book without glancing into it to make sure that it will never again be wanted? Picking and tasting in this indeliberate way, the invalid appetite is half coaxed to sit up and take proper nourishment. This destruction and reconstruction I certainly found recovering, and I can, therefore, commend them to be included in the pharmacopæias.

Another nourishing exercise when you are in this state is the overhauling of your accumulations of memoranda, cuttings and note-books. I have sat for hours during the last few days, like a beaver unbuilding its dam, turning out with a view to destroying their contents, drawer after drawer and shelf upon shelf. It is fatal to set about the operation with any tenderness. Your aim must be to destroy everything which

does not command you to spare it. The tragic recklessness of the procedure is the virtue of the medicine. As a matter of fact there is little or nothing now left in my drawers for future use. Nearly all my paper-boats have been burned, including some three-decked galleons which were originally designed to bring me fame. No matter; the Rubicon is crossed, and to be on the other side of newspaper with no more than a thin portfolio of notes is to have escaped cheaply.

For the humour of it, however, I will record a careful exception. It appears, after all, that I was not so mad as I seemed. Perchance newspaper, being only a feigned literature, induces only a feigned madness. Be it as it may. I find that my current note-book, though as handy and tempting to be destroyed as any other, was nevertheless destroyed only after the cream of it had been whipped into the permanent book which I have kept through many rages for a good many years. The extracts are here before me as I write in convalescence. It is amusing to me to observe, moreover, that their cream is not very rich. Much better has gone into the bonfire. Why, then, did I save these and sacrifice those? Look at a few of them. "Nobody's anything always"—is there aught irrecoverable in that to have compelled me to spare it? "Lots of window, but no warehouse"—a remark, I fancy, intended to hit somebody or other very hard indeed—but *does* it? Is any of the present company fitted with a cap? "The judgment of the world is good, but few can put it into words." That is a premonitory symptom, you will observe, of a remark made a

few lines above to the effect that literature is a personal expression of a common opinion or judgment. I have plainly remembered it. *Apropos* of the *New Age,* I must have told somebody, and stolen home to write it down, that its career is that of a rocking-horse, all ups and downs but never any getting forward. It is too true to be wholly amusing; let me horse-laugh at it and pass it on. "A simple style is like sleep, it will not come by effort." Not altogether true, but true enough. The rest are not much worse or better, and the puzzle is to explain why those should be taken and these left.

Again *apropos,* may a physician who has healed himself offer this piece of advice? Read your own note-books often. I have known some people who have a library of note-books worth a dukedom, who never once looked into them after having filled them. That is collecting mania pure and simple. From another offensive angle what a confession of inferior taste is made in preferring the note-books of others to one's own. A little more self-respect in this matter is clearly necessary if your conversation is to be personal at all; for in all probability the references and quotations you make *without* the authority of your own collection are hackneyed. They are the reach-me-downs of every encyclopædia. Is this the reason that the vast majority of current quotations are as worn as they are; that a constant reader, forewarned of the subject about to be dealt with, is usually forearmed against the tags he will find employed in it? In any case, the advice I have just given is the corrective of this depressing

phenomenon of modern writing. You have only to trade in your own note-books to be, and to give the air of being, truly original.

Browsing is a rather more advanced regimen for convalescence than the re-arrangement of books. The latter can be performed without the smallest taste for reading. It is a matter of sizing them up, and any bookseller's apprentice can do it. But browsing means dipping into the contents here and there; it is both a symptom of returning health and a means to it. In the last few days I must have nibbled in a hundred different pastures, chiefly, I think, in the pastures of books about books. De Quincey, Matthew Arnold, Bagehot, Macaulay, Johnson, etc.—what meadows, what lush grass, what feed! After all, one begins to say, literature cannot be unsatisfying that fed such bulls and that so plumped their minds. It cannot be only a variety of newspaper. Thus a new link with health is established, and one becomes able to take one's books again. Here I should end, but that a last observation in the form of a question occurs to me. Is not or can not a taste for literature be acquired by the same means by which it can be re-acquired? Are not the child and the invalid similar? In that case the foregoing directions may be not altogether useless.

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Nature in English Literature

In observation of Nature, English literature excels all others. But that is by no means to say that every

English writer upon Nature is good. The astonishing thing is that contemporary with such masters of both Nature-observation and literary expression as—to name but two—Mr. W. H. Hudson and Mr. Warde Fowler (and half a dozen others could be named in the same street) there should still be so many writers insensible enough to perfection to write about Nature when they have little to say and few gifts of expression. You would think that having seen the sun they would not light a candle, or that if they did, nobody would look at it. But the truth is that not only are many candles lit, but they are all much admired—much more, indeed, than the suns themselves. There may be a good reason for it, namely, that the reading public is so much in love with Nature-writing that the best is not good enough for us. Or, again, everybody living in the country and having a pen at all, wishes to write his own Nature-observations as everybody wishes to write his own love-lyrics, regardless of the fact that the best love-lyrics have already been written. It may be so; but the admission appears to me to be over-generous.

Mr. Percy W. D. Izzard has published in book form his "Year of Country Days" under the general title of *Homeland.* The series has appeared in the *Daily Mail,* where it appears to have given pleasure to a considerable number of readers. I do not doubt the fact. Even the least suggestion of Nature would be a relief in the stuffy and bawling atmosphere of the *Daily Mail.* But in the form of a book, in which three hundred and sixty-five of them appear, they are almost

intolerable. Their value lay in their contrast to the surrounding columns of the journal in which they were published. Take away that background and let them stand by themselves, and they are seen to be what they are—pale, anæmic, and not very knowledgeable commonplace observations. Nothing really exciting appears to have happened in the country under Mr. Izzard's observation. When reading Jefferies or Hudson or Warde Fowler or Selous, you are made to feel, in a simple walk along a hedgerow, that something dramatic is afoot. Discovery is in the air. But Mr. Izzard is never fortunate, and all he has to record are the common places of the country-side, which I could as easily reconstruct from a calendar as gather from his text, "The silver clouds are heaped together in billowy masses that sail with deeps of Italian blue between." How pretty! But the delight is wanting.

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S. S. S.

The Simplified Spelling Society has broken loose from obscurity again in the issue of a new pamphlet, called *Breaking the Spell; an Appeal to Common Sense.* A preface contributed by Dr. Macan rehearses all the old "reasons" for simplifying our spelling with as little attention as ever to the real reasons against it. "Spelling," we are told, "should be the simplest of all arts." It is so in Spanish, in Italian, in Welsh, and in Dutch, and it was so in Greek and Latin. Why

not, therefore, in English? The reasoning, however, is ridiculous, for it assumes that it was by some deliberate and self-conscious design that these languages came to be spelled phonetically, and hence, that we have only to follow them faithfully (and the advice of the S. S. S.) in order to place our language in a similar state. Language, however, is not a product of logic and science, but of art and taste. It is determined not by reason alone, but by the totality of our judgment, in which many other factors than reason are included. To ask us to "reform" our spelling in order to make it "reasonable" is to ask us to forgo the satisfaction of every intellectual taste, save that of logic; a procedure that would not only "reform" our spelling, but all literature into the bargain. It is pretended that the adoption of simplified spelling would have, at worst, only a passing effect upon the well-being of literature. If, for example, all the English classics were re-spelled in conformity with phonetic rules, and their use made general, very soon, we are told, we should forget their original idiosyncrasies, and love them in their new spelling as much as ever. But people who argue in this way must have been blinded in their taste in their pursuit of rationalistic uniformity. Literature employs words not for their rational meaning alone, not even for their sound alone, but for their combined qualities of meaning, sound, *sight,* association, history, and a score of other attributes. By reducing words to a rational rule of phonetic spelling, more than half of these qualities would be entirely, or almost entirely, eliminated. A re-spelled Shake-

speare, for instance, if it should ever take the place of the present edition, would be a new Shakespeare—a Shakespeare translated from the coloured language in which he thought and wrote into a language of logical symbols. An exact analogy—as far as any analogy can be exact—for the proposal of the S. S. S. would be to propose to abolish the use of colour in pictorial art, and to produce everything in black and white. The colour-blind would, no doubt, be satisfied in the one case, and, in the other, the word-blind would be equally pleased. Fortunately, both proposals have the same chance of success.

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Sterne Criticism

Everybody knows that Sterne's *Sentimental Journey* broke off suddenly in the second book at the crisis of a Shandian incident. What everybody does not know—I confess I only learnt it myself a few days ago—is that Sterne's Editor "Eugenius" not only concluded the incident, but carried on the journey to the extent of another two books. He did this, he informs us, from notes and materials left or communicated to him by Sterne himself, and he is so frank as to say that he has striven to complete the work in the style and manner of his late friend. Having a particular admiration for the style of Sterne, which, to my mind, is the easiest ever achieved in English, I have now a double resentment against the presumptuous Eugenius. In

the first place, I question the man's veracity almost as much as the veracity of Sterne himself is to be questioned in the matter of Sterne's intention of completing his journey. The *Journey* was a *tour de force;* it was the result as it were, of a challenge. Sterne had made a bet that he would maintain the reader's interest in a series of the most trivial incidents by his mere manner of writing about them. That he had any other intention than that of showing his power I do not for a moment believe; least of all the suggestion that he had a plan of writing in his mind which required the book to be finished in four sections, four and just four. Eugenius's excuses that he had often discussed the completion of the *Journey* with Sterne, and had heard from him the "facts, events, and observations," intended to be introduced into the unwritten book, are thus a mere literary device for getting his own work tied to Sterne's kite. Even if Sterne gave him authority for it, I should refuse to believe it, since Sterne may easily have been badgered into consenting; and, in any case, is not necessarily to be believed upon a matter of fact. One's resentment is embittered by the manner in which Eugenius makes the continuation. It is notorious that Sterne never made a statement that could definitely incriminate himself. It was his whole art to leave everything to his readers' imagination, and to put upon them the odium of the obvious interpretation. An admission on his part would have been fatal not only to himself, but to the style and intention of his work, which may be described as skating upon thin ice. Eugenius, however, in spite of all the intimacy which he

says subsisted between himself and Mr. Sterne, was so far from having appreciated the elementary quality of the *Journey* that in completing the very incident on which Book Two breaks off, he falls into the blunder of committing Sterne to a "criminal" confession. I need not say what the confession is; it is the obvious deduction to be drawn from the description provided by Sterne himself. And it is precisely on this account that I am certain Sterne would never have made it.

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Sterne on Love in France

One of my correspondents must have been reading Sterne at the same time that I was being annoyed by Eugenius, for he has written to remind me of Sterne's opinion of Love as it is understood in France. "The French," wrote Sterne, "have certainly got the credit of understanding more of Love, and making it better than any other nation upon the earth; but for my own part I think them arrant bunglers, and in truth, the worst set of marksmen that ever tried Cupid's patience." My correspondent recalls the fact from the dark backward and abysm of time that in a discussion of Stendhal, I expressed the same opinion; and he has, no doubt, supplied the parallel in order to gratify me. Gratifying it is, in one sense, to find oneself confirmed in a somewhat novel opinion—which, moreover, was thought to be original as well—by an observer of the penetration of Sterne. But it is less gratifying

when one reflects that Sterne was the last person in the world to have the right to talk about Love at all. What should a genuine as well as a professed sentimentalist have to say of Love more than that in its practice the French were not sentimental enough for him? But it is not the defect of sentimentality that stamps Love as understood in France with the mark of inferiority, but the presence of too much egoism—a fault Sterne would never have observed.

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English Style

The same correspondent copies out for me Quincey's "fine analysis of Swift's style," as follows:—

> The main qualification for such a style was plain good sense, natural feeling, unpretendingness, some little scholarly practice in the putting together of sentences so as to avoid mechanical awkwardness of construction, but above all, the advantage of a *subject* such in its nature as instinctively to reject ornament lest it should draw attention from itself. Such subjects are common; but grand impassioned subjects insist upon a different treatment; and there it is that the true difficulties of style commence, and there it is that your worshipful Master Jonathan would have broken down irrecoverably.

This "fine analysis" of Swift's style does not appear to me to be anything more than a powerful attack delivered by an apostle of the opposing school. Swift and de Quincey are obviously poles apart in the direction of their style, and I have no doubt that I could

find in Swift as severe an analysis of de Quincey as my correspondent has found in de Quincey of Swift. At bottom the controversy carries us back to the very foundations of European culture. On the whole, Swift followed the Greek tradition—exemplified by Demosthenes—while de Quincey followed the Latin—exemplified by Cicero. There can be no doubt of the school to which Swift belonged; his *Drapier's Letters,* for instance, were confessedly modelled on Demosthenes. Likewise there can be no doubt of the school which de Quincey attended; he learned his style of Cicero. The question, however, is one of taste, by no means a matter of *non est disputandum.* Which of the two schools of style is capable of the highest absolute development; and, above all, which is the most suited to the English language? My mind is fully made up; I am for the Greek and Demosthenes against the Latin and Cicero. I am for Swift against de Quincey; for the simple against the ornate.

De Quincey appears to me to fall into an almost vulgar error in assuming that the style of plain good sense cultivated by Swift is fit only for commonplace subjects, and that "grand impassioned subjects" demand an ornate style. The style of Demosthenes was obviously quite as well fitted to the high subjects of his Discourse on the Crown as to the details for the fitting out of an expedition against Philip. The *Apology* of Plato is in much the same style, and not even de Quincey would say that the subject was not anything but commonplace. With the majority of English critics, I have a horror of fine writing, and

especially about fine things. The proper rule is, in fact, the very reverse of that laid down by de Quincey; it is on no account to write upon "grand impassioned subjects" in a grand impassioned style. After all, as the Greeks understood, there are an infinite number of degrees of simplicity, ranging from the simple colloquial to the simple grand. The ornate Latin style, with its degrees of ornateness, is, on the other hand, a bastard style. The conclusion seems to be this: that the simple style is capable of anything, even of dealing with "grand impassioned subjects"; whereas the ornate style is only barely tolerable in the most exceptional circumstances. I would sooner trust Swift than de Quincey not to embarrass a reader on a difficult occasion, as, for the same reason, I prefer Shakespeare the Greek to Ben Johnson the Latinist.

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Literary Culs-de-sac

A cul-de-sac occurs in literary history when a direction is taken away from the main highway of the national language and literature; when the stream it represents is not part of the main stream of the traditional language, but a back-water or a side stream. There have been dozens of such private streams in the course of our literary history, and I am not denying for an instant that their final contribution to the main stream has been considerable.

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The Decline of Free Intelligence

Pure intelligence I should define as displaying itself in disinterested interest in things; in things, that is to say, of no *personal* advantage, but only of general, public, or universal importance. Interest (to turn the can in the pan) is the growing end of the mind, and its direction and strength are marked by a motiveless curiosity to know; it reveals itself, while it is still active, as a love of knowledge for its own sake. Later on it often appears that this motiveless love had a motive; in other words, the knowledge acquired under its impulse is discovered in the end to "come in handy," and to have been of use. But the process of acquiring this knowledge is for the most part, indeliberate, unaware of any other aim than that of the satisfaction of curiosity; utility is remote from its mind. This is what I have called disinterested interest, and it is this free intelligence of which it appears to me that there is a diminishing amount in our day. Were it not the case, the fortunes of the really free Press would be much brighter than they are. An organ of free opinion would not need to discover a utilitarian attraction for its free opinions, but would be able to command a sale on its own merits. Such, indeed, is the case in several European countries, notably in France, Italy, and Germany. I am told that it is the case also in Bohemia (in which country there is not only no illiterate, but no un-read adult) and in the provinces of Yugo Slavia. In these countries, a journal of opinions can live with-

out providing its readers with any commercial or specialist bribe in the way of exclusive utilitarian information; it can live, that is to say, by the sale of its free intelligence. Happy countries—in one sense of the word; happy if also tragical; for their existence is not always, at any rate, a paradise for the rich, a hell for the poor, and a purgatory for the able!

To what is due this decline amongst us of free intelligence? There are several explanations possible, though none is wholly satisfying. It can be attributed to the industrialization of our own country, a metamorphosis of occupation which has been longer in being in England than anywhere else. The economic balance between primary and secondary production has been for a longer period lost in this country than elsewhere, with the consequence that we have been the first to exhibit the effects of over-industrialization in the loss of the free intelligence associated with primary production. The other nations may be expected to follow suit as the same metamorphosis overtakes them. Another explanation is the reaction against the intellectualism of the nineteenth century. It is a familiar topic, but it is obvious that if faith in the ultimate *use* of intelligence is lost, men become cynical in regard to the passion itself. Let us suppose that every love affair always and invariably ended in disappointment or disaster. Let us suppose that it became the accepted belief that such would always be the case. Would it not soon become fashionable to nip the first stirrings of love in the bud, and to salt its path whenever its shoots began to appear? The nineteenth century

reached its climax in a vast disappointment with science, with the intellect, with intellectualism. The fifth act of the thrilling drama inaugurated after the French Revolution closed in utter weariness and ennui. It was no wonder that the twentieth century opened in a return to impulse and in a corresponding reaction from intellectuality. That the reaction has gone too far is the very disease we are now trying to diagnose; for only an excessive reaction towards impulse and away from thought can account for the poverty of free intelligence. Sooner or later, the pendulum must be set free again, if not in this country, then in America, or in some of the countries whose rebirth we are now witnessing. It cannot be the will of God that free intelligence should be extinguished from the planet; the world, somehow or other, must be made safe for intelligence as well as for democracy.

My last guess at the origin of the phenomenon is the decline of the religious spirit. Religion, I conceive, is the study and practice of perfection, and it is summed up in the text: "Be ye perfect, even as your Father in Heaven is perfect." This impossible and infinite aim includes, as a matter of course, the employment and development of intelligence as one of the most powerful aids to perfection. Fools, the Indian Scriptures inform us, can enter heaven, but only wise men know how to stay there. And if the perfection we seek is to be lasting and incorruptible, it is certain that an infinite amount of intelligence will be necessary to its accomplishment. The loss of the belief in the perfectibility of the human spirit, in the religious duty of

perfection, might easily account for the diminution of our regard for one of the chief instruments of perfection, namely, intelligence. Why should we strive to set the crooked straight, since it is not only impossible, but is no duty of ours? And why labour with the instrumental means when the end is of no value? None of these explanations, however, really satisfies me.

The free Press is more severely criticized by its readers than the "kept" Press by its clientèle. The reason is, no doubt, that in comparison with the "kept" Press it protests its freedom and sets itself up on a pedestal. Every "excuse" is consequently denied to it, and the smallest complaint is enlarged to a grievance. The "kept" Press may be caught in flagrant self-contradiction, in lies, in chicanery of all kinds, in every form of intellectual and other dishonesty—it continues to be read and "followed" as if the oracle were infallible. No newspaper in this country has ever died of exposure; many live by being found out. The free Press, on the other hand, has often for its readers not only the most exigent of critics, but the most contradictory. They are not only hard to please (which is a merit), but their reasons for being pleased, or the reverse, are bewilderingly various. And, moreover, when they are pleased they are usually silent, and when they are displeased they cease to buy the journal.

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Literary Copyright in America

Horace Walpole used to say that the Americans were the only people by whom he would wish to be admired. Let me put the compliment a little differently and say that the Americans are the people among all others whom we would most wish to admire most. Having done so much to command our admiration already, we are not only willing, we are desirous and anxious, that they should leave no amendable fault unamended in themselves. Our command to them is that they should become perfect.

This must be my excuse for joining in the discussion concerning the law of literary copyright in America, and the effect it has on the literary relations of this country and America. I must agree with Mr. Pound that the literary relations of our two countries are bad, and that much of this estrangement, if not all of it, is due to remediable causes lying at present on the American book of statutes. The actual facts of the situation are simple. The copyright laws of America, unlike those of any other civilized country, with the exception of ex-Tsarist Russia, require as a condition of extending the protection of its copyright to any work of foreign publication that the latter shall be set up, printed, and published in America within a period of thirty to sixty days after the publication in the country of its origin. Failing such practically simultaneous publication in America, not only is an American publisher thereafter entitled to proceed immedi-

ately to publish the work in question without the permission of the author, but the author and his national publishers are not entitled to demand any royalties or fees on the sale of the same. In other words, as far as the original author and publisher are concerned, they are non-existent in America unless they have made arrangements for the publication of their work in America within one, or, at most, two months of its original publication in their own country.

Not to exaggerate in describing such a procedure it can be exactly characterized by no other phrase than looting under the form of law. Every author and publisher in this country knows how difficult it is to arrange for the simultaneous publication of works at home and in America. The time-conditions of publication are seldom the same in both countries. A book that is timely in this country may not be simultaneously timely in America, and it would be very odd if it always were.

Again, a couple of months is a small period of time in which to arrange to have an English work dispatched, accepted, set up, printed, and published in America. Commercial difficulties of all kinds arise in the course of the transaction, and every delay brings the day of the accursed shears of the American Copyright Act nearer. Is an English publisher to bargain with the advantage of time always on the side of America, with the certain knowledge that, unless he comes to terms at once, he will lose everything both for himself and his author? But either that or indefinitely delaying publication in *this* country is his only

possible course. The American Copyright Law is thus seen to be a modern example of Morton's fork. By requiring that the foreign author shall publish his work in America within one or two months of its publication at home, the law compels him to make a choice (in the majority of cases) between forfeiting his copyright in America, and delaying, at his own cost, the publication of his book in his own country. Upon either prong he is impaled. If he elects for American publication he must forgo the chance of the immediate market at home, and if he elects for immediate publication at home he must forgo the protection of American copyright.

Such an ingenious device for Dick-Turpining European authors cannot have been invented and enforced without some presumed moral justification. America cannot be conceived as a willing party to the legislation of literary piracy, and it was and is, no doubt, under some cover of justification that the law was enacted and now runs. The defence for it, I should suppose, is the presumed necessity for protecting the industry of book-making in America on behalf of American authors, printers, and publishers alike. Its defence, in short, is the same defence that is set up for protection in commercial matters in this country, namely, the desirability of excluding foreign competition, and of encouraging home industry. Against this defence, however, there is a great deal to be said that ought to weigh with the American people, and that ought to weigh in their calculations as well as in their taste and sense of right. For, as to the latter, I take it that no American

would undertake to defend his Copyright Law on the principles either of good taste or common justice. It cannot be in conformity with good taste for the literary artists of America to procure protection for themselves by penalizing their European confrères, and it cannot be justice to rob a European author of his copyrights, or to compel him to delay his publication in Europe. These admissions I take for granted, and the only defence left is the calculation that such a Copyright Act is good for the American book-making interests.

If books were like other commodities, their sale, like the sale of other commodities, would fall under the economic law of diminishing returns. Thereunder, as their supply increased, the demand for books would tend to decrease, as is the case with cotton, say, or wooden spoons. And upon such an assumption there might be some reason for prohibiting the free importation of printed books, since the imported articles would compete in the home market for a relatively inelastic demand. But books, it is obvious, are not a commodity in this sense of the word. They do not *satisfy* demand, but *stimulate* it, and their sale, therefore, does not fall under the economic law of diminishing returns, but under the very contrary, that of increasing returns. Books, there is no doubt of it, are the cause of books. New books do not take the place of old books; nor do books really compete, as a general rule, with each other. On the contrary, the more books there are, the more are demanded and the more are produced. The

free importation of books is not a means of contracting the home-production of books; it is the very opposite, the most effective means of stimulating home-production to its highest possible degree. If I were an American author, resident in America, and concerned for the prosperity of the American book-making profession, craft, and industry, I should not be in the least disposed to thank the American Copyright Law for the protection it professes to give me. The appetite for books, upon which appetite I and my craft live, grows, I should say, by what it feeds on. Addressing the Copyright Act as it now exists, I should say to it: "In discouraging the free importation of foreign books, and in alienating the goodwill of foreign authors and publishers, you are robbing foreign authors (that is true), but, much worse, you are depriving my public of the stimulus necessary to its demand for my books. Since we authors in America have a vital interest in increasing literary demand, and the more books the more demand is created, our real protection lies in freely importing books, and not in placing any impediment in their way. Intending to help us, you—the Copyright Law—are really our enemy." I cannot see what reply the Copyright Law could make to this attack upon it by its protégés, and I believe, moreover, that if they were to make it, the Law would soon be amended.

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Right Criticism

To abandon the aim of "finality" of judgment is to let in the jungle into the cultivated world of art; it is to invite Tom, Dick, and Harry to offer their opinions as of equal value with the opinions of the cultivated. It is no escape from this conclusion to inquire into the "mentality" of the critic and to attach importance to his judgment, as his mentality is or is not interesting. In appraising a judgment I am not concerned with the mentality, interesting or otherwise, of the judge who delivers it. My concern is not with him, but with the work before us; nor is the remark to be made upon his verdict the personal comment, "How interesting!" but the critical comment, "How true!" or "How false!" Personal preferences turn the attention in the nature of the case from the object criticized to the critic himself. The method substitutes for the crticism of art the criticism of psychology. In a word, it is not art criticism at all.

It may be said that if we dismiss personal preference as a criticism of art judgment, there is either nothing left or only some "scientific" standard which has no relevance to æsthetics. It is the common plea of the idiosyncrats that, inconclusive as their opinions must be, and anything but universally valid, no other method within the world of art is possible. I dissent. A "final" judgment is as possible of a work of art as of any other manifestation of the spirit of man; there is nothing in the nature of things to prevent men

arriving at a universally valid (that is, universally accepted) judgment of a book, a picture, a sonata, a statue, or a building any more than there is to prevent a legal judge from arriving at a right judgment concerning any other human act; and, what is more, such judgments of art are not only made daily, but in the end they actually prevail and constitute in their totality the tradition of art. The test is not scientific, but as little is it merely personal. Its essential character is simply that it is right; right however arrived at, and right whoever arrives at it. That the judge in question may or may not have "studied" the history of the art-work he is judging is a matter of indifference. Neither his learning nor his natural ignorance is of any importance. That he is or is not notoriously this, that, or the other, is likewise no concern. All that matters is that his judgment, when delivered, should be "right." But who is to settle this, it may be asked? Who is to confirm a right judgment or to dispute a wrong one? The answer is contained in the true interpretation of the misunderstood, saying, *De gustibus non est disputandum.* The proof of right taste is that there is no real dispute about its judgment; its finality is evidenced by the cessation of debate. The truth may be simply stated; a judge—that is to say, a true judge—is he with whom everybody is compelled to agree, not because he says it, but because it is so.

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Man's Survival of Bodily Death

What the circulation of the *Quest* is I have no idea, but it should be ten times greater. Is there, however, a sufficiently large class of cultured persons in England—in the Empire—in the world? Assuming that the spread of culture can be reckoned numerically as well as qualitatively, can we pride ourselves on the extension of culture while the number of free intelligences is relatively decreasing? But how does one know that this class is really on the decrease? Only by the same means that we judge the number of the curious lepidoptera in any area—by holding a light up in the dark and counting the hosts attracted by it. In the case of the *Quest* there is no doubt whatever that a light is being held up in our darkness. Its articles are upon the most exalted topics; they are, for the most part, luminously written, and their purity of motive may be taken for granted. The *Quest* is the literary Platonic Academy of our day. Yet it is seldom spoken of in literary circles. We "good" are very apathetic, and it is lucky for the devil that his disciples are unlike us in this respect. They see to it that everything evil shall flourish like the bay-tree, while we allow the bays of the intelligent to fade into the sere.

Mr. Mead contributed an article on a topic which has not yet been exhausted, "Man's Survival of Bodily Death." Mr. Randall is not the first to deny "immortality" while affirming an absolute morality, nor even the first to attempt to explain religion without recourse

to a dogma of survival. The Sadducees did it before him; and the Confucians managed somehow or other to combine ancestor-worship with a lively denial of their continued existence. There is, moreover, an ethical value in the denial which almost makes the denial of survival an act of moral heroism. For if a man can pursue the highest moral aims without the smallest hope of personal reward, hereafter, and, still less, here, his disinterestedness is obvious; he pursues virtue as the pupil is enjoined in the *Bhagavad Gita* to act, namely, without hope or fear of fruit. I am not of the heroic breed myself, and, in any case, the problem is one of fact as well as of moral discipline. It may be heroic to put the telescope of truth to a deliberately blinded eye, but unless you suspect yourself of being unable to master the fact, I see no indispensable virtue in its wilful denial. At all risks to my morality I should prefer to keep my weather-eye open for such evidences of survival as may loom up behind the fog.

Premising that "no high religion can exist which is not based on faith in survival," Mr. Mead proceeds to examine the two forms of inquiry which conceivably promise conclusions: the comparative study of the mystic philosophers and their recorded religious experiences in all ages, and the more material examination of the spiritualistic phenomena of modern psychical research. For himself, Mr. Mead has chosen the former method, and I am interested to observe his testimony, in a rare personal statement, to the satisfaction, more or less, that is possible from following this road. At the same time, though without any experience in

the second method, Mr. Mead is explicitly of the opinion that it is one that should be employed by science with increasing earnestness. The difficulties are tremendous, and as subtle as they are considerable. Before survival can be scientifically demonstrated, a host of working hypotheses must be invented and discredited, and the utmost veracity will be necessary in the students. With such facts before us as telepathy, dissociated personality, subconscious complexes, auto-suggestion and suggestion, the phenomena that superficially point to survival may plainly be nothing of the kind. Survival, in short, must be expected to be about the latest rather than the first psychic fact to be scientifically established. The student must, therefore, be exigent as well as hopeful.

There is a third method from which we may hope to hear one day something to our advantage—assuming that the certain knowledge of survival would be to mankind's advantage—the method of psycho-analysis. If psycho-analysis of the first degree can make us acquainted with the subconscious, why should not a psycho-analysis of the second degree make us acquainted with the super-conscious; and as the language of the subconscious may be sleeping dreams, the language of the super-conscious may be waking visions. To return to Mr. Mead's article, an interesting account is contained in it of a recent census taken in America by Professor Leuba of the creeds of more or less eminent men. The returns for the article of faith in survival and immortality are curious, not to say surprising. Of the eminent physicists canvassed, 40 per cent. confessed

their belief in man's survival of bodily death. Thereafter the percentage falls through the stages of historians 35 per cent., and sociologists 27 per cent., to psychologists with the degraded percentage of 9. It is a strange reversal of the procession that might have been anticipated, and it expresses, perhaps, the condition of real culture in America. For that the physicists should be the most hopeful class of scientists in America, and the psychologists the most hopeless is an indication that the best brains in America are still engaged in physical problems. The poor psychologists are scarcely even hopeful of discovering anything.

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Beardsley and Arthur Symons

"Unbounded" admiration is precisely what I cannot feel for Aubrey Beardsley's work, even "within its own sphere." I ought to say, perhaps, "because of its sphere." Pure æsthetic is a matter for contemplation only, and we should be prepared upon occasion to suspend every other kind of judgment. Or, would it not be true to say that the pure æsthetic does itself suspend in the beholder every other form of judgment or reaction—such as the moral, the intellectual, and the practical? A great tragedy, for instance, is a kind of focus of the whole nature of man; every faculty is engaged in it, and all are lifted up and transfigured into the pure æsthetic of contemplation. But one is not aware, in that case, of moral or other reser-

vations; one has not to apologize for the experience by pretending that the "essentially repulsive and diabolic decadence" contained in the tragedy is merely an expression of the age. Beardsley is only "something of a genius" precisely because he failed to transfigure the moral and other reactions of the spectator of his work. He did not occupy the *whole* of one's mind. All the while that one's æsthetic sense was being led captive by his art, several other of one's senses were in rebellion. His command (his genius, in short) was not "absolute," but only a quite limited monarchy. This is not to deny that he was an artist; it is to deny only that he was one of the greatest of artists. Other artists owe him a greater debt than the world at large. He was a great art-master, but not a master of art. The doctrine of Mr. Arthur Symons is dangerous. Juggling with the terms good and evil is always dangerous, since in a prestidigital exhibition of them, one can so easily be made to look like the other. *Demon est Deus inversus.* The paradoxical truth about the matter, however, is that evil is good only so long as it is regarded as evil. The moment it is thought of as good it is nothing but evil. Mr. Arthur Symons has confused in his mind the problem of good and evil with the quite alien problem of quantity of energy.

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"Æ's" "Candle of Vision"

"Æ's" *Candle of Vision* is not a book for everybody, yet I wish that everybody might read it. Rarely and more rarely does any artist or poet interest himself in the processes of his mental and spiritual life, with the consequence, so often deplored by Mr. Penty, that books on æsthetics, philosophy, and, above all, psychology, are left to be written by men who have no immediate experiences of what they are writing of. "Æ's" narrative and criticism of his personal experiences may be said to take the form of intimate confessions made *pour encourager les autres*. For, happily for us, he is an artist who is also a philosopher, a visionary who is also an "intellectual"; and, being interested in both phases of his personality, he has had the impulse and the courage to express both. What the ordinary mind—the mind corrupted by false education—would say to "Æ's" affirmations concerning his psychological experiences, it would not be difficult to forecast. What is not invention, it would be said, is moonshine, and what is neither is a pose to be explained on some alienist hypothesis. Only readers who can recall some experience similar to those described by "Æ" will find themselves able to accept the work for what it is—a statement of uncommon fact; and only those who have developed their intuition to some degree will be able to appreciate the spirit of truth in which the *Candle of Vision* is written. A review of such work is not to be undertaken by me, but I have made a few notes on some passages.

Page 2. *"I could not so desire what was not my own, and what is our own we cannot lose . . . Desire is hidden identity."* This is a characteristic doctrine of mysticism, and recurs invariably in all the confessions. Such unanimity is an evidence of the truth of the doctrine, since it is scarcely to be supposed that the mystics borrow from one another. But the doctrine, nevertheless, is difficult for the mere mind to accept, for it involves the belief that nothing happens to us that is not ourselves. Character in that event is destiny—to quote a variant of "Æ's" sentence; and our lives are thus merely the dramatization of our given psychology. Without presuming to question the doctrine, I feel a reserve concerning its absoluteness. Fate appears to me to be above destiny in the same sense that the old lady conceived that there was One above that would see that Providence did not go too far. To the extent that character is destiny or, as "Æ" says, desire is hidden identity, a correct psychological forecast would be at the same time a correct temporal forecast. And while this may be true, in the abstract and under, so to say, ideal conditions, I cannot yet agree that everything that happens to the individual is within his character. The unforeseeable, the margin of what we call Chance, allows for events that belong to Fate rather than to Destiny.

Page 3. "Æ" says he *"was not conscious in boyhood (up to the age of sixteen or seventeen) of any heaven lying about me."* "Childhood," he thinks, is no nearer the "eternally young" than age may be.

Certainly it appears to be so in the case of "Æ" himself, for the intimations of immortality which Wordsworth (and the world in general) attributed to children were only begun to be experienced by "Æ" after his sixteenth or seventeenth year. From that time onwards, as this book testifies, he has been growing younger in precisely those characteristics. There is a good deal to be thought, if not said, on this subject. Children are, I conceive, rather symbols of youth than youth itself; they are unconsciously young. Age, on the other hand, has the power of converting the symbol into the reality, and of being young and knowing it. Unless ye become, *not* little children, but *as* little children, ye shall in no wise enter the Kingdom of Heaven. At the same time it is comparatively rare for the ordinary child, that "Æ" says he was, to develop childlikeness in later life. Usually a return occurs to a state unconsciously experienced in early youth. But there appear to be strata of characteristics in every mind, and life is their successive revelation. Without knowing anything of the facts, I surmise that "Æ's" heredity was mixed, and that the first layer or stratum to appear was that of some possibly Lowland Scot ancestry. When that was worked through, by the age of sixteen, another layer came to the surface, whereupon "Æ" entered on another phase of "desire."

Page 7. *"We may have a personal wisdom, but spiritual wisdom is not to speak of as ours."* This illustrates another characteristic of the mystic that

while his experiences are personal, the wisdom revealed in them is always attributed to "Him that taught me" —in other words, to something not ourselves. An egoist mysticism is a contradiction in terms. Not only no man is entitled to claim originality for a spiritual truth, but no man can. The truth is no longer true when it has a name to it. "Truth bears no man's name" is an axiom of mysticism. The reason, I presume, is that the very condition of the appreciation of a spiritual truth is the absence of the sense of egoism. Such truths are simply not revealed to the egoistic consciousness, and therefore cannot appear as the product of human wisdom. Their character is that of a revelation from without rather than that of a discovery from within, and the report of the matter is thus objective rather than subjective.

Page 16. *"I could prophesy from the uprising of new moods in myself that without search I should soon meet people of a certain character, and so I met them. . . . I accepted what befell with resignation. . . . What we are alone has power. . . . No destiny other than we make for ourselves."* I have already expressed my doubts whether this is the whole truth. It is, of course, the familiar doctrine of Karma; but I do not think it can be interpreted quite literally. There is what is called the Love of God, as well as the Justice of God, and I would venture to add, with Blake, the Wrath of God. Judgment is something more than simple justice; it implies the consent of the whole of the judging nature, and not of its sense of justice only.

Love enters into it, and so, perhaps, do many other qualities not usually attributed to the Supreme Judge. In interpreting such doctrines we must allow for the personal equation even of the highest personality we can conceive.

Page 19. *"None needs special gifts of genius."* "Æ's" *Candle of Vision* is confessedly propagandist. It aims deliberately at encouraging age to discover eternal youth, and to lay hold of everlasting life. It is to this end that "Æ" describes his own experiences, and offers to his readers the means of their verification. He is quite explicit that no "special gifts" or "genius" are necessary. "This do and ye shall find even as I have found." The special gift of genius does not, I agree, lie in the nature of fact of the experience (though here, again, favour seems sometimes to be shown), but it does, I think, lie in the bent towards the effort involved. Anybody, it is true, may by the appropriate means, experience the same results, but not everybody has the "desire" to employ them. Desire, moreover, is susceptible of many degrees of strength. Like other psychological characteristics, it appears to peel off like the skins of Peer Gynt's onion. What is it that I really desire? Ask me today, and I shall answer one thing. Ask me next year, and it may be another. Years hence it may have changed again. But desire, in the mystical sense, is the desire that is left when all the transient wishes or fancies have either vanished or been satisfied. Only such a desire leads the student to make the effort required by "Æ," and

the possession of such a desire is something like a "special gift" or "genius."

Page 20. *"Our religions make promises to be fulfilled beyond the grave, because they have no knowledge now to be put to the test. . . . Mistrust the religion that does not cry out: 'Test me that we can become as gods.'"* This is an excellent observation, and accounts, to my mind, for all the so-called scepticism of modern times. It is usual to attribute to our predecessors, the most remote as well as the more recent, a quality of "faith" superior to our own. They are said to have been more religious than we are. I do not believe it; or, rather, I believe that they were religious because they had very good reason to be; in other words, they were not only told the mysteries, but they were shown them. Either they or their priests, had the "open vision." Is it conceivable that the primitive peoples had the confidence-trick played on them? Or, again, is it the fact that credulity is less today than before? I feel sure that if our ancestors were brought to belief, it was by means which would equally carry conviction to the present generation. To repeat myself: They believed because they were shown. "Æ" suggests that the after-life promises of modern religion are a substitute for an evasion of present demonstration. Religions, that is to say, concentrate upon the invisible because their power over the visible is gone. It is not the fact, however, that the earlier religions ignored the after-death adventures of the soul; they were quite as much concerned with the life

beyond the grave as our own religions. What they did, and what our religions fail to do, was to give present guarantees for their future promises. Their priests could procure belief in the after-life on the strength of their demonstrated power over this life. It is probable, indeed, that many of the elect experienced "death" before it occurred physically. The Egyptian mysteries were a kind of experimental death.

Page 21. Here and on the neighbouring pages "Æ" expounds his method of meditation—the means by which any "ordinary" person may acquire spiritual experience. "Æ's" method follows the familiar line of the mystic schools, namely, "unwavering concentration on some mental object." "Five minutes of this effort," "Æ" says, "will at first leave us trembling as at the end of a laborious day." I can testify that this is no exaggeration, for, like "Æ," I have practised meditation after the methods prescribed. It is no easy job, and after months of regular practice I was still an amateur at the simplest exercises. There is no doubt, however, about the benefit of it. Much is learned in meditation that cannot be realized by any other mental exercise. The *mind* becomes a real organ, as distinct from the personality as a physical limb. And gradually one learns to acquire sufficient control over it, if not to use it like a master, at any rate, to realize that it *can* be so used. I have not the smallest doubt that one day men will be able to "use" their minds, and thus to cease to be "used" by them; for it is obvious that at present we are victims rather than

masters of our mind. Meditation, as a means of mind-control, is the appointed method, and "Æ's" personal experience should encourage his readers to take up the discipline.

Page 41. In regard to "visions," they are usually dismissed by the commonalty as products of imagination, "as if," says "Æ," "imagination were as easily explained as a problem in Euclid." This habit of referring one mystery to another, as if this latter were no mystery, is very common; and it arises, no doubt, from intellectual apathy. We cannot be bothered to reduce mysteries to knowledge, and, moreover, the realization that literally everything is a mystery, that we simply live in mystery, is a little disconcerting. Hence our preference for assuming some things, at any rate, to be below the need of explanation. Imagination, however, provides us with no escape from the mysteries of vision, any more than matter provides us with an escape from the problems of spirit. "Æ" raises some difficult, and, probably, insoluble problems concerning imagination itself. *What* is it in us that imagines? *How* does it cast thoughts into form? Even allowing (which we cannot) that imagination is only the re-fashioning of memory, what re-fashions and transforms out of their original resemblance the memories of things seen? "Æ" has had many visions, some of which, no doubt, he could trace to recollected impressions; but, leaving aside once more the difficulty involved in this reconstruction, what of the visions that had, or appeared to have,

no earthly progenitors? "Æ's" conclusion appears to be indisputable, that "we swim in an æther of deity"—for "in Him we live and move and have our being."

Passim. Is it possible that telepathy occurs between people having the same mental "wave-length"? Coincidences (another Mesopotamian word, by the way) are too frequent to be accountable on any other supposition than that of an established communication. Like many another, I could give some remarkable instances of telepathy, but they would be tedious to relate. Mental training, however, is certainly a means to this end; for in proportion as the mind is brought under control, its susceptibility to thoughts from outside palpably increases. The experience of the Old Testament prophet who knew the plans of the enemy before they were uttered, is not unique, even in these days. It will be far less uncommon in the days to come.

Page 54. *"Is there a centre within us through which all the threads of the universe are drawn?"* An ingenious image for a re-current doctrine of mysticism, the doctrine, namely, that everything is everywhere. One of the earliest discoveries made in meditation is the magnitude of the infinitesimal. The tiniest point of space appears to have room enough for a world of images; and the mediaeval discussion concerning the number of angels that could dance on the point of a needle was by no means ridiculous. If I am not mistaken, "Æ's" problem is identical with it.

Page 89. The Architecture of Dreams. In this chapter "Æ" sets himself to casting some doubts (shall we say?) on the sufficiency of the Freudian theory of dreams. Dreams, according to Freud, are the dramatization of suppressed desires; but what, asks "Æ," "is the means by which desires, suppressed or otherwise, dramatize themselves?" "A mood or desire may *attract* its affinities"; in other words, there may be a congruity between the desire and the dream which serves the Freudian purpose of interpretation; but desire can hardly be said "to *create* what it attracts." Between anger, for instance, and a definite vision of conflict, such as the dream may represent, there is a gulf which the theory of Freud does not enable us to cross. What, in fact, *are* dreams? *Who* or *what* carries out the dramatization? Assuming, with Freud, that their impulse is a desire, what power shapes this desire into the dream-cartoon? "Æ" throws no light on the mystery, but, at any rate, he does not dismiss it as no mystery at all. Its philosophical discussion is to be found in the Indian philosophy known as the Sankhya.

Page 89. "*The process must be conscious on some plane*"—the dramatization, that is to say, must be the conscious work of some intelligent agent or quality. I am a little doubtful of this, for reasons to be discovered in the Sankhya philosophy just referred to. Is the pattern taken by sand on a shaken plate a "conscious" design? Are frost-flowers the work of intelligence? Forms, according to the Sankhya, are

the reflection in matter (Prakriti) of the activities of the spirit (Purusha); they are consciousness visible. But it would not follow that they are themselves conscious or that their creation is a "conscious" process.

Page 90. "Have imaginations body?" In other words, are the figures seen in dream and vision three-dimensional? "Æ" describes several incidents within his experience that certainly seem to suggest an objective reality in dream-figures, and the occasional projection of dream-figures into phantasms is a further evidence of it. But, once again, I would refer "Æ" to the Sankhya aphorisms, and to Kapila's commentary on them. The question is really of the general order of the relation of form to thought.

Page 114. Here, and in the succeeding essay, "Æ" develops his intuitional thesis that sound and thought have definite affinities. For every thought there is a sound, and every sound is at the same time a thought. The idea is, of course, familiar, and, like many more in the *Candle of Vision,* is found recurring like a decimal throughout mystical and occult literature in all ages. The most ancient occult literature—dispute whether that of India or Egypt—is most precise on the subject, the general proposition being therein reduced to a series of equivalents in which form, sound, colour, thought, emotion, and number, all seem to be interchangeable. Each of these, in fact, is said to be a language—a complete language; and to the initiate it is a matter of indifference

whether the text before him is "written" in form, in colour, in number, or sound. Unfortunately, neither "Æ" nor anybody within our knowledge, is able to procure even the skeleton key to the mystery. The records are so perversely confused that I cannot believe that their authors were not deliberately playing a game with us. It would be rather like the old initiates to "dis" their type before leaving it to be examined by the barbarian invaders; and certainly nobody of ordinary faculty can begin to make head or tail of the "correspondences" recorded in the Indian scriptures. It is the same, strangely enough, with Plato, whose *Cratylus* deals with the relation of verbal language to mental conception. A master of simple exposition, he becomes in the *Cratylus,* whether from design or feebleness of understanding, as cryptic as the Indians themselves. I have read the *Cratylus* all ways, with no better result than to feel that I have wasted my time. "Æ" has approached the problem, however, experimentally, with the aid of his intuition. If, he said to himself, there is really a definite correspondence between sound and idea, meditation on one or the other should be able to discover it. In other words, he has attempted to rediscover the lost language, and to find for himself the key whose fragments bestrew the ancient occult works. This again, however, is no novelty, but another of the recurrent ideas of mystics and would-be occultists. All of them have tried it, but, unfortunately, most of them come to different conclusions. "Æ's" guesses must, therefore, be taken as guesses

only, to be compared with the guesses with other students.

Page 132. One of the features of the *Candle of Vision* is the occasional ray cast by "Æ" upon the obscure texts of the Bible. The Bible, of course, is for the most part unmistakably "occult"; and not only its stories are myths ("which things are an allegory"), but many of its texts are echoes of a gnosis; infinitely older than the Christian era. Greece, it has now been established, was an infant when Egypt was old; and Egypt, in its turn, was an infant when some civilization anterior to it was in its dotage. The Bible is a kind of ark, in which were stored (without much order, I imagine) some of the traditions of the world that was about to be submerged. They can be brought to life again, however, and here and there, in the course of the *Candle of Vision,* "Æ" undoubtedly rejuvenates a Biblical text, and restores to it its ancient meaning. "He made every flower before it was in the field, and every herb before it grew." This points, says "Æ," to the probability that the Garden of Eden was the "Garden of the Divine Mind," in which flowers and herbs and all the rest of creation lived before they were made—visible! Such a conception is very illuminating. Moreover, it brings the story of Genesis into line with the genesis stories of both ancient India and the most recent psychology. For modern psycho-analysis, in the researches of Jung in particular, is undoubtedly trembling on the brink of the discovery of the divine mind

which precedes visible creation. The process is indissolubly linked up with the psychology of imagination, phantasm, and vision.

Page 137. On Power. "*If we have not power we are nothing, and must remain outcasts of Heaven.*" In this chapter "Æ" shakes the fringes of the most dangerous subject in the world, that of the acquisition of "spiritual" power. I put the word under suspicion, because while in the comparative sense spiritual, the powers here spoken of may be anything but beneficent. The instructions to be found in, let us say, Patanjall, are full of warnings against the acquisition of occult powers before the character of the student is "purified." We are a long way, of course, from the plane of conventional goodness in the use of this word purity. The conventionally good may have all the characteristics of the black magician (so-called) when he finds himself in the possession of power. Purity, in the sense implied, connotes non-attachment, and non-attachment, again, implies the non-existence of any personal desire —even for the good. Nietzsche died before he began to understand himself. His pre-occupation with the problem of power was undoubtedly an occult exercise; and his discovery that spiritual power needs to be exercised "beyond good and evil," was a hint of the progress he had made. Unfortunately for Nietzsche, his *Beyond Good and Evil* was still not clear of the element of egotism; he carried into the occult world the attachment and the desire that emphatically belong to the world of both Good and Evil.

In short, he attempted to take Heaven by egoistic storm, and his defeat was a foregone conclusion and a familiar tragedy in occult history. "Æ," like his authorities, is full of warning against the quest of power. At the same time, like them, he realizes that without power the student can do nothing. Here is the paradox, the mightiest in psychology, that the weakest is the strongest and the strongest the weakest. I commend this chapter to Nietzscheans in particular. They have most to learn from it.

Page 153 et seq. "Æ" makes an attempt to systematize "Celtic cosmogony." It appears to me to be altogether premature, and of as little value as the "interpretation" of Blake's cosmogony, which Messrs. Yeats and Ellis formerly attempted. Celtic cosmogony, as found in Irish legend and tradition, may be a cosmogony, and perhaps one of the oldest in the world (for Ireland is always with us!). But the fragmentary character of the records, the absence of any living tradition in them, coupled with the difficulty of re-interpretation in rational terms, make even "Æ's" effort a little laborious. There is little illumination in the *Candle* when it becomes an Irish boglight.

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How to Read

The greatest books are only to be grasped by the total understanding which is called intuition. As an

aid to the realization of the truth, we may fall back upon the final proofs of idiom and experience. Idiom is the fruit of wisdom on the tree of language; and experience is both the end and the beginning of idiom. What more familiar idiom is there than that which expresses the idea and the experience of reading a book "between the lines"; reading, in fact, what is not there in the perception of our merely logical understanding? And what, again, is more familiar than the experience of "having been done good" by reading a great, particularly a great mystical or poetical work, like the Bible or Milton; still more, by reading such works as the *Mahabharata?* Idiom and experience do not deceive us. The "subconscious" of every great book is vastly greater than its conscious element, as the "subconscious" of each of us is many times richer in content than our conscious minds. Reading between the lines, resulting often and usually in a sense of illuminated bewilderment, difficult to put into words, is in reality intuitional reading; the subconscious in the reader is put into relation with the subconscious of the writer. Deep communicates with deep. No "interpretation" of an allegorical kind need result from it. We may be unable at once to put into words any of the ideas we have gathered. Patience! The truths thus grasped will find their way to the conscious mind, and one day, perhaps, to our lips.

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The Old Country

A country may grow aged in mind long before it is really old in history, and it may be the case with England that long before she is old in history her mind is becoming aged. The peculiarity of the aged mind is not that it cannot think, but that it cannot think new thoughts. All its energy runs in grooves, and there is none to spare for the cutting of a new road into new ideas. There is little and less "free mind" in England. Like the commons and the common-wealth, all the mind-energy has been appropriated by one interest or another, with the consequence that every fresh idea is compelled either to starve at home or to emigrate abroad. America, as an intellectually youthful nation (may it never grow aged!) reaps the advantage of the decline of its aged parent. Ideas that cannot pick up a living in this country, owing to the appropriations of energy already made, may emigrate to America and flourish there.

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Looking for the Dawn

The Spring issue of *Art and Letters* has been long enough out to have had its run for its money. Consequently I am free to say that it is not only not so good as the first issue, but that the descent has been steep as well as rapid. This decline from the almost

sublime to the more than ridiculous was inevitable from the peculiar characteristics of our immediately contemporary epoch; for it is the sober truth that our contemporary world does not supply youthful stuff enough to make more than a single issue of a literary magazine of high pretension. I have looked about me with the eye of an eagle and the appetite of a raven to discover youthful talent possibly budding into genius. A few sprigs and sprays have fallen within my vision, and I have counted myself recompensed for hours and years of trouble. But at this present moment such apparitions and premonitions of the future are fewer than ever I have known them to be. Whether it is that more than individual—*collective* talent—has fallen in the war; whether the increasing pre-occupation of men's minds with economics has proportionately impoverished the will to literature of our young men; or whether a critical taste is losing generosity, the number of fresh talents just being committed to us appears utterly unequal to the unequalled opportunity for employing them. There never was a time when it was easier for a young writer to find publication in one form or another. The number of new magazines projected and issued recently has been legion. I have examined most of them; for it is my hobby to collect the earliest specimens, and it is my unpleasant opinion that most of them would be better for never having been born.

They manage, or, at any rate, they are beginning to manage these things better in America. That America is the country of the future is open to less

doubt as a prophecy when the critic has made acquaintance with the new and renewed magazines now appearing in that country. A tone of provinciality still dominates a considerable part of the American literary Press, but it is obvious that tremendous efforts are being made to recover or, let us say, to discover centrality. American literary editors are more and more aiming to interest the world of readers rather than a mere province of them. I need scarcely say that the world of readers is not the same thing as a world of readers. A world of readers connotes large numbers, consisting chiefly of readers in search of amusement; but the world of readers consists of the few in every country who really read for their living, or rather, for their lives. To appeal to the latter class is to be "of the centre," for the centre of every movement of life is not only the most vital, it is the smallest element, of the whole. The most recent American literary journals appear to me to be endeavouring to become organs for this class of reader. It is not indicated more plainly in the fact that they are enlisting European writers than in the fact that their American contributors are writing to be read in Europe as well as in America. America has begun to discover Europe. America is on the way to absorb Europe. In the course of a few generations, if the present American magazines may be taken as indicating direction, European writers will be as intelligible in America as in Europe; and, perhaps, more so.

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Fielding for America

It is very doubtful whether anybody reads Fielding nowadays, nevertheless, like all the eighteenth century writers, he is more than worth all the time we waste on certain contemporaries. There is nothing of the "damned literary" about Fielding; but also there is nothing of what usually goes with the absence of letters, sentimentality. Fielding's letters, one feels, were absorbed into his blood; they did not remain like crumbs on the lips after a barbarian repast. Fielding could carry his letters as his contemporaries boasted they could carry their port—without showing it. And it was no less the case that he carried his feelings with the same well-bred ease, without displaying them, and, even more, without permitting them to rule his intelligence. Richardson seems born to have provoked Fielding to write. He incarnated everything that Fielding thought worth a negative. But for Richardson, Fielding would possibly have never found his true *métier;* Richardson was his twin opposite. Fielding, however, must always pay the penalty of being a reactionary, of requiring a stimulant; he is no creator, for the stuff of creation was not native to him. He is an amusing *causeur* with his eye always upon Richardson; a man of the world telling a story *à la* Richardson, but with the explanations common to the class of English gentlemen. He is put among the English *Men of Letters* in the series edited by Lord Morley, and now he is receiving attention in

America. America needs Fielding; for what is America in danger of becoming but a kind of Richardson continent? Our eighteenth century writers are a school to which American literature must go as a means of escape from the Roundhead tradition which otherwise America will scarcely succeed in overpassing. I cannot conceive, however, that *Tom Jones* will be popular in America yet awhile. He has more resistance to encounter there than in any other civilized nation. But until *Tom Jones* can be read in America without a blush, American literature will remain several centuries behind English and European literature.

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Poor Authors!

Is it a fact that the dearness of literature alone or mainly restricts its sale? Is it certain that either cheap publication or (what amounts to the same thing) a generous diffusion of money among the masses would ensure the success of, let us say, good first novels—in the present state of public taste? We have had some experience both of cheapness and of the diffusion of money. Publication was cheap enough before the war in all conscience. New novels could be brought out for a shilling. Was it the common experience that the best of them proved a commercial success? The best of them were nine times out of ten a commercial failure. And in respect of

the diffusion of money, what has been our experience of the direction in which the diffused money has been spent? Have the masses accumulated libraries? Have they patronized the arts? Have they encouraged literature with discriminating taste? Have they sought out and bought the young authors, the promising writers, the writers of tomorrow? We know they have done nothing of the kind. The diffused money has fallen, for the most part, into two sets of hands, the hands of the ignorant profiteers and the hands of the ignorant masses. And both classes have neglected literature in favour of sports and furs, display and amusement. It is idle to pretend that things are other than they are. We need not necessarily be discouraged by the fact, but it is necessary to recognize the facts. And the facts in the present case are that the people who have the money (much or little) do not care a shilling for literature and accept no responsibility for its existence. Their *excuse* for the moment is that literature is too dear; but it would be all the same if it were cheap. I have never observed that rich or poor have complained that their sports and amusements are too dear. Nobody appeals to cinema-proprietors or yachting entrepreneurs to pity their clients and ruin themselves commercially. When the public wants literature as much as it wants to be entertained, there will be no need for anybody's charity.

In the meanwhile, what is the young writer to do? In particular, the young novelist? He appears to be about to be among the most miserable of mankind.

To be published and to be a commercial failure is bad enough in a country like our own, where a *succès d'estime* is almost a certificate for pity. But not to be published at all is infinitely worse. Instead of appealing to commercial publishers, however, is it not possible to appeal to the Guild of Authors, to the fraternity whose function and responsibility are the creation and encouragement of literature? Who should be patrons of literature if not men of letters themselves? And whose duty should it be, if not that of novelists as a guild, to secure the succession and to provide for the future princes? If publishers are willing to assume the burdens of literature—always heavy in proportion to the ignorance of the public—let them by all means. So much the more honour to them. But the proper shoulders for the burden, in the absence of an enlightened public, are the shoulders of the Guild of Letters, the shoulders, in particular, of the *successful* men. There is no lack of money among them. I should roughly calculate that the income of our successful novelists is more than equal to that of all our publishers put together. Why should they not subsidize literature? Why, out of their abundance, should they not set aside a portion for their literary posterity?

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On Guard

As one of the thirty thousand who take in and occasionally read *The Times Literary Supplement,* I

may draw attention to the danger to truth its composite character is always creating. Being familiar with the back-ways of publishing I am not taken in, of course, by the uniform use of the editorial "we" in a journal like *The Times Literary Supplement*. "We" represents a score of different people, all, or most of whom are as much at intellectual sixes and sevens as any other score; and the editor-in-chief, whoever he may be, is just as powerless as a sovereign is over its twenty shillings. That being granted, the situation is still a little strange from the fact that certain sentiments are allowed to appear in the *Literary Supplement* which, to say the least, are incongruous with *The Times* and all *The Times* stands for. Here, for instance, are three quotations from recent issues: "Whether you beat your neighbour by militarism or buy him by industrialism—the effect is the same." "That most false and nauseating of legends—'the happy warrior.'" "The organization of trade is of secondary moment: what is of the first moment is the organization of a humane enjoyment of its benefits." These sentiments are true, and they are sufficiently strikingly put. But in *The Times Literary Supplement* they are not only incongruous, but they are in a very subtle sense, actually lies, and the more dangerous lies from their identity with the truth. It is one of the paradoxes of truth that a statement is only true when it is in truthful company. As the corruption of the best is the worst, so evil communications corrupt good statements, and a truth in bad company is the worst of lies. It is a mystery not easily to be under-

stood, but the intuition may, perhaps, make something of it. Is it not the fact that the occurrence of statements like those just quoted in *The Times Literary Supplement* causes a feeling of nausea? On examining the cause it will be found to lie in the unconscious realization that such statements are there made for no good purpose, but are only decoy ducks for the better snaring of our suffrages for the real policy of *The Times* itself.

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The Coming Renaissance

The prognostication of the approach of a new Renaissance has quite naturally been received with incredulity. Is it not the fact that civilization is in a thoroughly morbid condition bordering on hysteria, and was ever the outlook for culture darker than it is at this moment? I have just been discussing the subject with a friend who laid this evidence before me with a touch of reproach: how *could* I, in the face of such a circle of gloom, pretend that we were even possibly (which is all I affirm) on the eve of a new Renaissance? My explanation of this part of the story is, however, quite simple. The war has precipitated a development in external events *faster* than the average mind has been able to adapt itself to them, with the consequence that the average mind has had to take refuge in hysteria. For the greater part of hysteria is due to nothing more than an inadequacy

of the mind to a given situation; and when the situation as given today is a situation that should and would, but for the war, have arisen only, let us say, twenty years hence, there is no wonder that in the mass of the slowly developing minds of our people an inadequacy to the occasion should be experienced or that the result should appear as hysteria. On the other hand, hysteria is not a stable condition of the mind; it is a transition to a more complete adaptation to reality, or, in the alternative, to complete disintegration. But what is to be expected from the present situation? Not, surely, disintegration in the general sense, though it may take place in individual cases, but a forward movement in the direction of adaptation. This forward movement is the Renaissance, and it is thus from the very circumstances of gloom and hysteria that we may draw the hope that a fresh advance of the human spirit is about to be made.

It is significant that concurrently with such a social diagnosis as any one may make, special observers, with or without a bee in their bonnet, are arriving at the same conclusion. There are very confident guesses now being disseminated by the various religious and mystic schools concerning what, in their vocabulary, they call the Second Advent—which, however, may well be the seven hundredth or the seven thousandth for all we know. Attach no importance, if you like, to the phenomena in question, but the fact of the coincidence of forecast is somewhat impressive; for while it is absurd to believe the "Second Adventists" of all denominations when they stand alone in their

prognostications, their testimony is not negligible when it is supported by what amounts to science. And the fact is that today science, no less than mysticism, is apprehensive of a New Coming of some kind or other. What the nature of that New Coming is likely to be, and when or how it will manifest itself, are matters beyond direct knowledge, but the ear of science, no less than the ear of mysticism, is a little thrilled with the spirit of expectation.

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Leonardo da Vinci as Pioneer

Leonardo da Vinci's name has been frequently mentioned among the intelligent during the last few years, and it cannot be without a meaning. It may be said that his reappearance as a subject for discussion is due to a fortuitous concurrence of publishers. But accidents of this kind are like miracles: they do not happen; and I, for one, am inclined to suspect the "collective unconscious" of a design in thrusting forward at this moment the name and personality of the great Renaissance humanist. What can we guess the design to be? What is the interpretation of this prominent figure in our current collective dreams? The symbols appearing in dreams are the expressive language of the unconscious mind, and the appearance of the symbol of da Vinci is or may be an indication that the "unconscious" is "dreaming" of a new Renaissance. And since the dreams of the uncon-

scious today are or may be the acts of the conscious tomorrow, the prevalent interest in Leonardo is a further possible piece of evidence that we are or may be on the eve of a recurrence of the Italian Renaissance.

Leonardo as an artist interests us less than Leonardo as a person. That is not to say that Leonardo was not a great artist, for, of course, he was one of the greatest. But it is to say that the promise of which he was an incarnation was even greater than the fulfilment which he achieved. There is a glorious sentence in one of the Upanishads which is attributed to the Creator on the morrow of His completion of the creation of the whole manifested universe. "Having pervaded all this," he says, "I remain." Not even the creation of the world had exhausted His powers or even so much as diminished His self-existence. When that greatest of works of art had been accomplished, He, the Creator, "remained." Leonardo was, if I may use the expression, a chip of the original block in this respect. His works, humanly speaking, were wonderful; they were both multitudinous and various. Nevertheless, after the last of them had been performed, Leonardo remained as a great "promise," still unfulfilled. That is the character of the Renaissance type, as it is also the character of a Renaissance period; its promise remains over even after great accomplishment. The Renaissance man is greater than his work; he pervades his work, but he is not submerged in it.

I should be trespassing on the domain of the psycho-

analysts if I were to attempt to indicate the *means* by which a collective hysteria may be resolved into an integration. Taking the Italian Renaissance, however, as a sort of working model, and Leonardo da Vinci as its typical figure, it would appear that the method of resolution is all-round expression—expression in as many forms and fields as the creative powers direct. Leonardo was not only an artist, he was a sculptor, a poet, an epigrammatist, an engineer, a statesman, a soldier, a musician, and I do not know what else besides. He indulged his creative or expressive impulses in every direction his "fancy" indicated. Truly enough he was not equally successful in an objective or critical sense in all these fields; but, quite as certainly he owed his surpassing excellence in one or two of them to the fact that he tried them all. The anti- or non-Renaissance type of mind would doubtless conclude that if Leonardo, let us say, had been content to be only a painter, or only a sculptor, he would have succeeded even more perfectly in that single mode of expression into which *ex hypothesi* he might have poured the energy otherwise squandered in various subordinate channels. But concentrations of energy of this kind are not always successful; the energies, in fact, are not always convertible; and the attempt to concentrate may thus have the effect, not only of failing of its direct object, but of engaging one part of the total energy in suppressing another. At any rate, the working hypothesis (and it did work) of the Renaissance type is that a natural multiplicity of modes of expression is better

than an unnatural or forced concentration. The latter, if successful, may possibly lead to something wonderful; but if unsuccessful, it ends in hysteria, in unresolved conflicts. The former, on the other hand, while it may lead to no great excellence in any direction (though equally it may be the condition of excellence) is, at any rate, a resolution of the internal conflict. We shall be well advised to deny ourselves nothing in the region of æsthetic creation. Let us "dabble" to our hearts' content in every art-form to which our "fancy" invites us. The results in a critical sense may be unimportant; "art happens," as Whistler used to say, and it "happens," it may be added, in the course of play. The play is the thing, and I have little doubt that the approaching Renaissance will be heralded by a revival of dilettantism in all the arts.

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"Shakespeare" Simplified

English literary criticism lies under the disgrace of accepting Shakespeare, the tenth-rate player, as Shakespeare the divine author, and so long as a mistake of this magnitude is admitted into the canon, nobody of any conception can treat the canon with respect. My theory of authorship is simple, rational, and within the support of common experience. All it requires is that we should assume that Shakespeare the theatre-manager had on his literary staff or within call a wonderful dramatic genius whose name we do

not yet know; that this genius was as modest as he was wonderful, and as adaptable as he was original; and that, of the plays passed to him for licking into shape (plays drawn from Shakespeare, the actor-manager's store), some he scarcely touched, others he changed only here and there, while a few, the few that appealed to his "fancy," he completely transformed and re-created in his own likeness. There is nothing incredible, nothing even requiring much subtlety to accept, in this hypothesis. The Elizabethan age was a strange age. It had very little of the passion for self-advertisement that distinguishes our own. It contained many anonymous geniuses of whom the obscure translators of the Bible were only one handful. The author of the plays may well have been one of the number—a quiet, modest, retiring sort of man, thankful to be able to find congenial work in re-shaping plays to his own liking. That, at any rate, is my surmise, and so far from thinking the theory unimportant, I believe it throws a beam of light on the psychology of genius during the Elizabethan age.

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The "London Mercury" and English

It goes without saying that the *London Mercury* had what is called a "good Press." Without imputing it to Mr. Squire for unrighteousness, it is a fact that Mr. Squire has a "good Press" for whatever he chooses to do. He appears to have been born with a

silver pen in his mouth, and for quite a number of years now it has been impossible to take a literary journal without finding praise of Mr. Squire in it. As a poet Mr. Squire deserves *nearly* all that is said of him; not for the mass of his work, but for an occasional poem of almost supreme excellence. As a literary *causeur,* of whom *The Times* said in compliment that "he never makes you think," he has the first and great qualification of readableness. Finally, as a parodist he is without a superior in contemporary literature. But when one has said this, one has said all; for Mr. Squire is not a great or even a sound critic, he is not an impressive writer, and he is not a distinguished or original thinker. Time and Mr. Squire may prove my judgment wrong, but I do not think, either, that he will make a great or inspiring editor. Great editorship is a form of creation, and the great editor is measured by the number and quality of the writers he brings to birth—or to ripeness. We see in course of time whether Mr. Squire is a creator in this sense. So far, he has not even a dark horse in his stable.

Among the objects set out to be accomplished by the *London Mercury* is the advancement of English style. It is a worthy and even a momentous object, but the *London Mercury* is not the first modern journal to set out upon this quest. After all, I, in my way, during the last seven years or so, have made occasional references to current English style, and my comments cannot be said to be distinguishd by any particular tenderness to bad English, by whomsoever it has been

written. It amused me, therefore, to read sundry and divers exhortations to Mr. Squire to be severe, and, if need be, "savage" in criticism, and especially when I observed that some of the names appended to the advice were of writers who have anything but appreciated the severity, let alone the "savagery," of reviews addressed to themselves. Let it pass. The thing in question is English style, and nobody can be too enthusiastic in its maintenance and improvement. The peril of English style, I take it, lies in its very virtue, that of directness, and its fighting edges are to be found where the colloquial and the vernacular (or, let us say, the idiomatic) meet and mix. The English vernacular is the most powerful and simple language that was ever written, but the danger always lies in wait for it of slipping into the English colloquial, which, by the same token, is one of the worst of languages. The difference between them is precisely the difference between Ariel and Caliban; and I am not sure that "Shakespeare" had not this, among other things, in mind when he dreamed his myth. Caliban is a direct enough creature to be English, and there are writers who imagine his style to be the mirror of perfection. But Ariel is no less direct; he is only Caliban transformed and purified and become a thing of light. There is, of course, no rule for distinguishing between them; between the permissible and the forbidden use of the colloquial; for it is obvious that the vernacular is finally derived from the colloquial. The decision rests with taste, which alone can decide what of the colloquial shall be al-

lowed to enter into the vernacular. In general, I should say, the criterion is grace; the hardest, the rarest, but the most exquisite of all the qualities of style. I hope one day to see English written in the vernacular, with all its strength and directness, but with grace added to it. Newman, perhaps, was furthest of all writers on the way to it. But Newman did not always charm. Now I have written the word, I would substitute charm for grace, and say that the perfect English style, which nobody has yet written, will charm by its power.

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Mr. G. K. Chesterton on Rome and Germany

Hovelaque's *Les Causes profondes de la Guerre* is either the original or a plagiarism of Mr. G. K. Chesterton's theory that the war was only an episode in the eternal "revolt" of "Germany" against "Rome." I put these words into quarantine to signify that they are to be handled with care; for it is not only Germany or Rome that is in question, but the psychological characteristics and the relation between them which they embody. Thus raised to psychological dimensions, Germany and Rome become principles, types of mentality: in radical opposition. Germany is of one camp, Rome is of the other, and given the fact of their inherent antagonism, war between them is endless. Mr. Mann, a German writer, has carried the subject

further; he has entered into particulars. In the following pairs of qualities, tabulated by Mr. Mann, the first of each is to be attributed to "Germany" and the other to "Rome." Heroic, rational; people, masses; personality, individuality; culture, civilization; spiritual life, social life; aristocracy, democracy; romance, classicism; nationalism, internationalism. I do not know how Mr. Chesterton will fare among these pairs of opposites, for it appears to me that his preferences are to be found at least as often among the "German" group as among the "Roman" group. There, however, they are, as drawn up by a supporter of his general theory, and we must leave him to make the best of them.

There is another pair which Mr. Mann has not mentioned, though it has been brought close home to many of us. The German "Persius" has confessed that "the lie has always been one of Germany's chief weapons, both by land and sea." The lie, however, is not the "Roman" way; the "Roman" way is silence, and anybody engaged in the dissemination of ideas knows which of the two forms of opposition is the more difficult to meet. After all, the liar takes risks; moreover, he does the idea he opposes the honour of noticing it if only to lie about it. But silence risks nothing; it kills without leaving a trace.

Leaving the subject where, for the moment, it is, we can inquire whether the suggested antagonism is not altogether false. *Is* Rome so eternal as all that, or Germany either? We have been familiarized with a view that represents the map of Europe as a

map primarily of mind; but I can discover in such a map no confirmation of the statement that it is Rome and Germany that are in permanent conflict. On the contrary, what we call "formal mind"—in other words, the rationalistic consciousness—appears to me to distinguish "Rome" quite as much as "Germany." It may be true that on the whole, the "Roman" qualities are better integrated and that the "Roman" type is more completely a "man of the world." But, in comparison with a type of the universal man, the man of the whole world, I doubt whether it can be said that the "Roman" is much more inclusive than the German. Both exclude a good deal, and thus the opposition between them is not of principle, but of accident, the accident being that the anthology of qualities which we call "Rome" differs from the anthology called German. It would follow from this that so far from being in necessarily eternal conflict "Rome" and "Germany" are susceptible of a synthesis in which the qualities of each will complement the qualities of the other. "Germany," in other words, needs to Romanize, while "Rome" needs to Germanize. Their approach to each other would mark the end of the conflict.

In so far as it is true that "Germany" represents the "elemental instincts" always in revolt against "Rome," "the representative of the supremacy of reason" (Hovelaque), there are grounds for believing that a psychological *rapprochement* is neccessary to the psychic health no less than to the peace of Europe. Long before the war we heard, even in this country,

criticism of the right of reason to supremacy; and, strangely enough, it was from the "Roman" Mr. Chesterton that the criticism came most powerfully. "Germany," in that case, may certainly be said to have taken the lead in the active revolt against Rome; but it was, we must observe, against a Rome already weakened from within by the dissatisfaction with Romanism of many of the leading "Romans." The fact is that the "supremacy of reason," for which "Rome" stands, is always in danger, like every other supremacy, of degenerating into a dictatorship; and the dictatorship which reason was establishing before the war involved precisely the suppression of the "elemental instincts" attributed to Germany. The so-called encirclement of Germany was, in fact, and in psychological terms, the rational encirclement of instinct; and I must again observe that it was not in geographical Germany alone that the encirclement was felt to be oppressive, but in every "Germany within us," in so far as each of us contained "elemental instincts" of any kind. The meaning of what I am saying is that the elemental instincts, call them German, or anything you please, cannot be permanently tyrannized over by "reason"; nor should they be. Nor is it necessary that reason should attempt such a dictatorship. Its rule should be that of a constitutional monarch under the direction of representatives, not of itself, but of the elemental instincts. The practical conclusion to be drawn is that the "eternal antagonism" of "Rome" and "Germany" is not a necessary fact in psychology. It becomes a fact only

when "Rome" aims at a dictatorship of reason to the inevitable isolation and suppression of "Germany." Reason must learn how to cultivate its instincts.

I do not imagine that Mr. Chesterton identifies "Rome" with the Holy See, though others, no doubt, do. It is interesting, however, to remark that before the war, and for a considerable period during the war, the policy of the Holy See was directed to the support of Germany. I have often wondered how a Catholic like M. Hovelaque accommodates his thesis with that fact. If the war, as he says, was only an episode in the secular conflict of Germany with Rome (meaning the Roman Church as the spiritual successor of the Roman Empire), how came it that before and during the war the directors of the Roman Church were pro-German? Something must surely be wrong here; for either the Roman Church did not take that view of Germany which M. Hovelaque has defined, or, as seems to me more probable, the Holy See had another end in view than victory over Germany, namely, alliance with a prospectively victorious Germany! With this key, I think, the mystery is unlocked for the ordinary man, however much it continues sealed to the faithful. As *The Times Literary Supplement* said: "Modernists understand no better than Newman the springs of Roman ecclesiastical policy, which is never fanatical or idealistic, but always based on cool political calculation." And, undoubtedly, the "cool political calculation" of the Holy See, both before and during the first years of the war, was that Germany would win. If this was not the case, how are we to explain the

sudden change over of policy when it began to appear that Germany, after all, was not to be the victor? That at a certain stage in the war such a change took place is well known to everybody, and it was openly admitted in the Catholic *Dublin Review.* "The pendulum of Catholicism," said the *Dublin Review,* "has swung away from Germany . . . with Austria and Spain . . . and with the English-speaking peoples and their Latin Allies the Catholic order in the era of the future." The "eternal conflict" theory must go by the board after this, for it obviously fails to fit the facts.

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The Origins of Marx

It is to be hoped that the reputation of Marx will not long survive the war unimpaired. I can scarcely think that the German Socialists will be so proud of their Marxism in the future as they have been in the past, since it will have clearly betrayed them into one of the most shameful moral surrenders in all history. It is dangerous for a man's writings to be regarded as the "Bible" even of Socialists; and when, in addition, the Marxian Bible, unlike the other, aims at and, in a sense, achieves logical consistency, the peril of it is greater upon minds lacking the inestimable virtue of common sense. Marx was not himself a slave of his own inspiration; he was anything but a Marxian in the sense in which his followers are Marxian. He

had, indeed, a very sharp word for certain of the disciples whose breed, unfortunately, has not been extinguished by it. "Amateur anarchists," he called them, who "make up by rapid declarations and bloodthirsty rampings for the utter insignificance of their political existence." Groups of his disciples, answering perfectly to this description, are to be found today in English as well as in other Labour circles. In between their rampings they reveal their political insignificance by inquiring of each other such elementary facts about literature and history as schoolboys should be ashamed to have forgotten. And the surprising thing is that even these open confessions induce no reaction upon their conviction that they understand Marx.

It is a common supposition among Marx's followers that not only has he left nothing to be said on the subject of economics, but that nothing was said before him. One German Socialist, at any rate, has rid himself of this notion, for Dr. Menger has remarked that "Marx was completely under the influence of the earlier English Socialists, and more particularly of William Thompson." In a valuable essay upon Marx, by Professor Alfred Rahilly, the facts are let out. Marx, it appears, came across Thompson's work on *The Distribution of Wealth* (1824) in the British Museum, and read it with great profit. From Thompson he took practically all his chief doctrines, with the exception of his peculiar interpretation of history in terms of economics. The theory of Value as measured by labour-power, the distinction between

capital and capitalism, the law of decreasing utility, and, above all, the very phrase as well as the very idea of Surplus Value—all of these "Marxian" doctrines Marx found in Thompson. I am not arguing that Marx was the less for having been indebted to his English predecessors. He would, indeed, in my opinion, have been a greater man if he had borrowed more of Thompson, for Thompson possessed the common sense to realize that it was possible that the concentration of capital might take place simultaneously with a diffusion of ownership—an idea which would have spared Marx the ignominy of many of his most fanatical disciples. What, on the other hand, was great in Marx, was his capacity for large generalizations, and his industry in establishing them. In this respect he belonged to the great Victorians, and, as such, he deserves more credit than his present-day followers will permit him to receive.

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Marx as Politician

The centenary celebrations of Marx ought not to conclude without a tribute to his astonishing political insight. Philosophically Marx was confused; as an economist he has suffered from his disciples; but as a political critic he has seldom been surpassed. Particular attention may be drawn to his analysis of the circumstances of Bismarck's annexation of Alsace-Lorraine, and to his forecast of the consequences. Though

writing in London, and without our historic knowledge of the Ems telegram, or our present knowledge of the world-war, Marx might have written his manifesto today; but, in that case, I doubt whether he would be published in Germany, or read with much attention by Marx's followers in this country. It is a strange reflection, indeed, upon the fate of the works of Marx that it is precisely the most clear and prophetic part of them which his professed followers neglect. For his dubious forecasts and his riddling analyses they have a reverence that transcends bibliolatry; but, concerning his most absolute and explicit political policies —not a word!

The war of 1870, as we all know, was for Germany a declared war of defence, exactly like the present war. Germany is always defending herself at the world's expense. No sooner, however, had the ostensible motive of defence been satisfied by Sedan, than the real objects of German militarism began to be revealed. Unhindered by the earlier protestations of the Emperor William that Germany was at war only with Napoleon, and not with France, the militarists inspired the German liberal bourgeoisie to press for annexations in the name of race and security. They dared to pretend, said Marx, that the people of the two provinces were burning to be annexed to Germany, and they adopted without reflection the excuse of the military party that a rectification of the Imperial frontiers was a strategic necessity. Thus, concluded Marx, they insisted upon sowing in the terms of peace the seeds of new wars—the phrase is Marx's

own. And what wars, too! Marx was not blind to their probable character. History, he said, would not measure the German offence by the number of miles of territory annexed, but by the significance of the fact of annexation. This significance was no less than a declaration of "a policy of conquest," from which might be anticipated in logical order a German racial war against "the Slav and Latin races combined." The war of 1870, having thus ended, would, he said, be the precursor of a series of international wars, in the course of which it was probable that the working-classes everywhere would succumb to the forces of militarism and Capitalism. What comment has the *Call* or any of our contemporary Marxian pacifists to make upon this? It is not right that they should ignore it, more especially when it is recalled that Marx paid a tribute to the English working-classes of his day, who "protested with all their might against the dismemberment of France."

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John Mitchel as the Same

Marx, however, was not the only observer of the events of 1870 to be moved to prophecy by them. As a matter of fact, everything has been foreseen. John Mitchel, the Irish Nationalist, whose name is invoked by Sinn Feiners today, was in Paris before the 1870 war, and wrote of the events of the war in the *Irish Citizen* and elsewhere during its progress.

He, too, had no illusions concerning the nature of Prussian militarism, and though his sympathies were mainly with France, he had a word of warning for England. "Prussia," he said, "cannot be England's friend. Prussia has her own aspirations and ambitions; one of these is to be a great maritime power, or rather *the* great maritime Power of Europe; and nothing in the future can be more sure than that Prussia, if successful in this struggle with France, will take Belgium, and threaten from Antwerp the mouth of the Thames." Things have not worked out exactly as Mitchel prophesied, but they have worked out nearly enough to justify his political clairvoyance. Like Marx, he was not deceived by the events before him, but both saw in them the shadows of the events which have now befallen us. I remark with irony that just as the self-styled followers of the economist Marx ignore the political judgments of their master, the professed inheritors of the Nationalist opinions of Mitchel ignore his international opinions. It is in this way that the garments of the great are divided, and the seamless coat shredded to make partisan ribbons.

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Norse in English

Professor C. H. Herford makes a meritorious attempt to recall attention to the influence and value of

the Norse Myths upon English Poetry. William Morris was most powerfully and directly influenced by the Sagas, and of Morris Professor Herford says that "no other English poet has felt so keenly the power of Norse myth; none has done so much to restore its terrible beauty, its heroism, its earth-shaking humour, and its heights of tragic passion and pathos, to a place in our memories, and a home in our hearts." It will not do, however, for (let me whisper it) who reads Morris's poetry today? Has he a home in our hearts? Are his Norse enthusiasms really anything to us? I am not defending our generation for neglecting Morris, or for being indifferent to the Norse theogony, of which he was a prophet. Our age is one of prose, and the passion of prose is justice—reasonable and regulated justice. Terrible beauty, earth-shaking humour, tragic passion, and so on—the stuff of epic poetry—are relegated nowadays to the police court. Moreover, the Norse mythology is not only "pagan" in the sense of being non-Christian, it is pagan in the sense of being sub- as much as pre-Christian, differing in this respect from the Indian mythology of the *Mahabharata,* or the Egyptian mythology of the *Book of the Dead.* We can never return to it without committing an act of regression, since it is a paganism of a world inferior rather than superior to the "Christian" world. At the same time, since we must carry all our sheaves with us, in order to enjoy the complete harvest of the human soul, it is necessary not to drop from consciousness the heroic

past, albeit a past to which we may not return. Let it be enshrined and enjoyed in poetry and music now that it is no longer possible in life.

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The Comedy of It

Comedy still remains a secret hid from the English mind, and not all the efforts of Mr. John Francis Hope to bring it into popularity will succeed where the prior efforts of Meredith have failed. The reason, as Mr. Hope has often explained it, even more clearly than Meredith, is not only that the spirit of Comedy demands "a society of cultivated men and women, wherein ideas are current and perceptions quick"—a condition certainly not now existing—but the absence of three qualities, each of which, unfortunately, blooms luxuriantly among us—"sentimentalism, puritanism, and bacchanalianism." Comedy, the play of the mind about real ideas, is quite incompatible with any one of these three vices. If you sentimentalize, play is over, and equally it is over if you are shocked, or if you carry the *suggested* humour of the situation too far. But one of these things the ordinary Englishman or woman is almost bound to do; and thus it comes about that "play," the sparkle of common sense, is so rare among us.

Meredith certainly worked very hard to instil Comedy into the English mind. His essay is a classic, and our only classic on the subject. And he may be

said to have written the whole of his novels in order to illustrate his idea. Meredith's novels are much more than a mirror held up in Nature; they are a model help to human nature; and, from this point of view, they are only an appendix to the *Essay on Comedy*. The serious way in which Meredith's novels are read, however, is an evidence of his failure, and it would be interesting to hear his secret comment on the critics who acclaim him as the grand portrait-painter of women. Did Meredith even set himself to draw a woman? Was his art not rather to "draw out" a woman from the imperfect society his times provided him? Were not his "portraits," in fact, constructive criticisms of the women he knew? I put these opinions into interrogation out of mere courtesy, for there is really no doubt whatever about them. Meredith drew women still to be, as he hoped they would become.

"To love comedy you must know the real world, and know men and women well enough not to expect too much of them, though you may still hope for good." That is an almost complete summary of the conditions of the comic spirit; but there must be added the "sense of society," the social sense, which is quite as important. This also introduces a considerable difficulty for us, since if "our English school had not clearly imagined society" in 1877, when Meredith wrote, it is less than ever probable today. In 1877, such people of intelligence as were living in England, were still more or less homogeneous in their general views about life. They were not eighteenth century

—the century of our highest English social culture; but they were not yet what we have subsequently become, discreet and warring atoms of intellectuality. It was possible when Meredith was alive for a group of people to meet, and to create something resembling a salon. The hope of realizing a "salon spirit" was not entirely dead. Today nothing is more improbable than even an attempt to restore a salon. Not only would nobody undertake to do it, but to nobody would it occur that its restoration is highly desirable. But the salon is, as it were, the foyer of the theatre of Comedy, as the theatre of Comedy is itself the foyer of the Civilized Life of Brilliant Common Sense; and if we cannot re-create a salon it is perfectly certain that the greater mysteries are beyond us. We may continue, however, to "hope for good," since that also is an essential of Comedy.

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The Epic Serbs

Kossovo: the Heroic Songs of the Serbs, translated by Miss Helen Rootham, has now been published for some months. If there is any "epic sense" alive in this country, it must surely be gratified by the appearance of these Serbian ballads, which are much more truly epic fragments than ballads as we understand the term. In the ballad proper the prevailing note is tragedy—sometimes individual, sometimes family, sometimes clan; but in the Serbian, as in the

Homeric, the tragedy expressed in the popular poetry is more spacious even than the nation; the nation becomes the race, and the race symbolizes a psychological power, which may very well be called a god—a suffering god. Grimm said of these ballads that there had been "nothing since Homer to compare with them; they were the best of all times and nations." Goethe compared them to the *Song of Songs*. Certainly there is something Homeric in them; and since they are sung today, they can be regarded as unique. Long dwelling on them, with a view to discovering their innermost secret, convinces me, however, that they differ from the Homeric mood in their comparative hopelessness. Mr. Baring says in his Introduction that these Serbian ballad-writers "saw the world with the eyes of a child and the heart of a man." "Child" is a word of multiple *entente;* and the difference between the Homeric and the Serbian "childhood" is that the latter appears doubtful whether it can grow up. Homer, we know, occasionally let fall a sad regret that his splendid heroes should still be children; and in the plays of Æschylus the high philosophical meditations of Homer are considerably elaborated. But in these Serbian ballads there does not appear to me any sign of the *mind* of a man, however much of the heart there may be. No Serbian Plato will ever find in them such a text as the Greek Plato found in Homer. It is to be wondered at. Serbia has always been on the frontier of European civilization, and perpetually in the trenches. Since 1389 Serbia has been in unbroken but unsubmissive

captivity, and her deliverance from alien bondage is only an event of yesterday. But if the elements of the future are contained in the quintessence of these ballads, there is no sight of a new Athens in them.

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Ernest Dowson

Mr. Arthur Symons's Introduction to the reprinted *Poems and Prose* of the late Ernest Dowson, has all the characteristics of the age to which both he and Dowson belongs. It is delicately appreciative, and not lacking in good judgment. Mr. Symons says, for instance, that Dowson was small enough to be overwhelmed by experiences that would have been nourishing food to a great man. But the style and manner of passing judgment almost completely contradict the matter of the judgment itself, and leave us in doubt whether Mr. Symons is not judging against his judgment. Literary criticism does not need to be literature; least of all does it need to be belles-lettres. Yet Mr. Arthur Symons and his whole school seem to aim at precisely this effect, that of writing in the same style as the work criticized. Thus we find him saying of Dowson: "all the fever and turmoil and the unattained dreams of a life which had so much of the swift, disastrous, and suicidal impetus of genius"—words and phrases which might have been written by Dowson himself. They are apologiastic of the per-

son when what we ask of criticism is judgment of the quality of the style, and in the unfortunate identification of genius with disaster and suicide they are almost an incentive to the little artists to trade on their neuroses. I do not know whether Mr. Symons knew Dowson personally; it is of no importance; but his bedside manner with ailing geniuses would have been anything but tonic.

It is symptomatic of Dowson's state of mind, though Mr. Symons misses the subtlety of it, that he was always repeating Poe's line: "the viol, the violet, and the vine." A special affection for labials and liquids is conclusive evidence of minority, not to say infantilism; and stylists with any ambition to excel, and to develop both themselves and their style, will be wise to watch their "v's" and "m's" and "l's," in fact, their labials and liquids generally. Dowson wallowed in liquids and labials to the end of his short life; his vocabulary never grew up, and I have no doubt that, had he been asked to quote his own best lines, he would have pointed, not to the notorious "Cynara," which is sufficiently pretty-pretty, but to these lines, in which he came as near to Poe as originality permits:—

> Violets and leaves of vine
> For Love that lives a day.

"One is essentially of the autumn," he wrote of himself. But that is not true, for Dowson was not ripe, but (I say it of course with respect) rotten. He re-

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mained in the cradle sucking sensations long after he should have been out in the world creating sensations. Life never got beyond his lips.

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A Sentimental Excursion

The writers of the *Venture,* a literary magazine published from Bristol, and written chiefly by members of the Postal Service, are sincere in that they are manifestly striving to acquire a good English style; and they are modest in that they do not pretend to have attained to it. Even better, and unlike so many current "stylists," they do not say that the unreachable grapes are sour, while those only which they can pluck are the perfect fruit; in other words, they do not try to pass off their defects as new beauties of style. Their models are good, and their exercises are promising. The introductory note contains, however, a little cant, rather out of key with the prevailing mood of the journal. It demands "stalwart criticism," not for itself only, but for literature in general. The *London Mercury* appeared before the world in the same austere attitude, calling in prophetic tones for sterner criticism, more out-spoken criticism, criticism that should both say and mean something, criticism, in short, of the kind which has for years ensured the ostracism of precisely that kind of critic. It is the easiest thing in the world to demand such criticism, and very popular on one condition

—that it be never actually provided. For the fact is that the criticism in question is really killing; and how many of those who ask for stern criticism would welcome their own extinction?

Special attention is directed to the longish poem by Mr. Francis Andrews. It is entitled "Mother," and the opening stanza is as follows:—

> You can see from the gate which once enclosed my world
> The tinted woods o' the hill and the white road wending,
> And among the nearer boughs wherein my stars were hung
> The blown and shifting wraith of the blue smoke curled.

Let us stop at that and collect our impressions. It is a very dangerous subject that Mr. Andrews has chosen. The temptation to indulge in "sob-stuff" in reflecting on "Mother," is well-nigh irresistible, since the sentiment goes back to the childhood not only of the individual, but of the race, and probably earlier. It is almost inextricably mingled with the tears of things. But tears are not a proper accompaniment of poetry or of beauty. The mission of Art is to dry all tears, and the utmost severity and serenity are needed in dealing with a profoundly emotional subject exactly to keep the tears from welling into it. That Mr. Andrews has not succeeded is evident from the opening stanza which I have just quoted. It is almost drenched with sentiment. Listen to the rhythm which is nearly a lullably in reverie, and let us ask ourselves whether it is not calculated, quite apart from the words, to throw the reader backwards into his mother's arms. "Which once enclosed my

world," "and the white road wending," "whereon my stars were hung," "the blown and shifting wraith of blue smoke curled"—these are sentimental rhythms, and their inevitable effect is to induce a reverie of the past rather than a meditation or contemplation of the future. The mood is backward-looking, and not forward-looking, an indulgence and not an effort of spirit. It is quite in accordance with the diagnosis that a concluding stanza of the poem should repeat the opening stanza, since there is no release in a mood of this kind. In great reveries it will be observed that the movement is forward and upward. The action starts from a profound sentiment, but it works its way upward to a triumphant assertion of spiritual realization. Look, for instance, at *Lycidas* or *Adonais,* both sentimental in origin, but both exalted in conclusion. There the song springs from a dewy bed, drenched with tears, but it mounts and mounts until it ends in the sky. Mr. Andrews keeps well to the ground, and, as I have said, his concluding stanza is only a slight variation of the prelude. The influence of Kipling is to be discerned at work, especially Kipling's "Envoi," beginning, "There's a whisper down the field." Kipling is another of the writer's whose sentiment is still tied to his mother's apron-strings; and his "Envoi" and "Mother o' Mine" are almost as poisonous to poetry as Meredith's "Love in the Valley." We need not be averse to sentiment as such, but the most careful discrimination between the nest and the sky is essential to an æsthetic use

of it. Let us start in sentiment, by all means, but let us rise from it as quickly as possible.

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The Newest Testament

Various attempts have been made from time to time to "render" the New Testament into colloquial English in order to bring it "up-to-date." None of these, we may congratulate ourselves, has so far been more than a nine days' sensation, and even less than that length of life is destined for the latest attempt, *Sayings and Stories,* a translation into "colloquial English" of the Sermon on the Mount and some Parables. The Yates Professor of New Testament Greek and Exegesis at Mansfield College gives us his assurance that however "startlingly unlike the familiar versions" these translations by Mr. Hoare may be, they are nevertheless "actual translations and not mere paraphrases," and he commends the "style" to the "candid judgment of the reader." The prose sections, in particular, he says, are "curiously reminiscent" of the "homely speech in which the sayings of Jesus Christ have been preserved." It may be so, but then, again, it may not; since, after all, it is not a question of reproducing in colloquial English the colloquial Greek of the original, but a question rather of reproducing in English the meaning of the Gospel writers; and this may very well require, not colloquial English, but the English vernacular in its highest de-

gree of purity, simplicity, and grandeur. I am not sufficiently acquainted with the popular Greek in which much of the New Testament was written to pass a candid judgment on its quality as a Greek style, but if the aim of the original writers was the grand style simple—as it must have been—whether they achieved it or not, it is indubitably achieved in the English of the authorized translation. Assuming the original, in fact, to be "faithfully" represented in the colloquial English of Mr. Hoare, I unhesitatingly say that the English of the authorized translation is nearer the spirit of the original than the present translation, and, in that sense, more fully faithful to the intentions of the original authors.

It would be tedious to cite more than one example, and I will take it in the very first sentence of Mr. Hoare's translation. "What joy," he says, "for those with the poor man's feelings! Heaven's Empire is for them," the authorized translation of which is too familiar to need quotation. I do not see what is gained, setting aside the cost by the substitution of the exclamatory "What joy . . ." for the ecstatic affirmation, "Blessed are the poor." Why again, "the poor man," and, after that, the "poor man's feelings"? Why also "Heaven's Empire" instead of "the Kingdom of Heaven"; and why "is for them" instead of "theirs is"? The gain, even literally, is imperceptible, and in cost a world of meaning has been sacrificed. "Blessed" is an incomparably more spiritual word than "joy"—in English, at any rate, whatever their respective originals may indicate; and

there is a plane of difference between an incontinent ejaculation such as "What joy," which resembles "What fun," and has in view rather a prospect than a fact—and the serene and confident utterance of an assured truth. Further, and again without regard to the literal original, "a poor man's feelings" must be miles away from the intention of the original authors, since it definitely conveys to us associations derived from social surroundings, social reform, and what not. Was *this* the intention of the Sermon on the Mount, the very location of which symbolized a state of mind above that of the dwellers in the plain of common life? Was it a socialist or communist discourse? If not, the "poor man's feelings," in our English colloquial sense, is utterly out of place, and the original must have meant something symbolically different. The substitution, again, of "Heaven's Empire" for the "Kingdom of Heaven" may be, as Professor Dodd assures us, a mere correct literal translation of the original phrase; but only a literary barbarian can contemplate it without grieving over the lost worlds of meaning. What is the prospect of an "Empire," even Heaven's Empire, to us today? As certainly as the phrase "Kingdom of Heaven" has come to mean, in English, a state of beatitude, the reversion to an "Empire" marks the decline of that state to one of outward pomp and circumstance. The spiritual meaning which must have characterized the intention of the Sermon on the Mount is completely sacrificed in the substitution of Empire for Kingdom. The volume is published by the "Congregational

Union of England and Wales," and it serves to indicate the depths to which Nonconformist taste can sink. We only need now this "colloquial English" version in the "nu speling" to touch bottom.

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Nothing Foreign

It is better for a nation to "import" art than to go without it altogether; and that it is the *duty* of its critics to stimulate home-production by importing as many as possible of the best foreign models. That home-production may fail to find itself encouraged to the point of creation is perfectly possible; inspiration may continue to be wanting; but of the two states of no home-production and no imports and no home-production and imports, the latter is to be preferred.

"Foreign" is a word that should be employed with increasing discrimination, and, most of all, by English writers. There is an English genius the perfect flower of which we have still to see; for perfect English has never yet been written. But nothing foreign ought to be alien to a race as universal in character and mentality as the English; and in the end, the perfection of the English genius is only possible in a spiritual synthesis of all the cultures of the world. Two tendencies equal and opposite are at work in this direction, and have always been in English history. On the one side, we find an ever-present tendency towards cosmopolitanism, an excess of which would

certainly result in the complete loss of essential national characteristics. On the other side, and usually balancing the first, we find an ever-present tendency towards insularity and æsthetic chauvinism, the excess of which would undoubtedly result in a caricature of the English genius—the development of idiosyncrasies in place of style. Somewhere between these two tendencies the critic of English art must fix his seat, in order that his judgment may determine, as far as possible, the perfect resultant of the blend of opposites. It is a matter, too, of time as well as of forms of culture. Not only are not all times alike, but there is a time for import and a time for export and a time for "protection"; but, equally, there is room for discrimination in the kind of art that may wisely be imported or exported. In general, we should import only what we need and export only what other nations need, and thus, in the old mediaeval sense, traffic in treasure. Thus guarded, nothing but good can come of the greatest possible international commerce of the arts.

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Psycho-Analysis

Psycho-analysis is not the last word in psychological method; and a great deal more of experiment is needed. Freud's theory of dreams, for instance, is excellent pioneer work in a field hitherto left more or less uncultivated, but it is very far from being ex-

haustively explanatory of the facts. Suppose it were possible to *control* dreams—in other words, to dream of what you will—would not the theory of Freud that dreams are subconscious wish-fulfilments stand in need of amendment? But to control dreams is not an utter impossibility. Sufficient experimental work has been done in this direction to prove that the gate of dreams is open to the intelligent will. And there is warrant for the attempt in a good deal of mystical literature. I was reading only recently the poems of Vaughan the Silurist, and what should I come across but the following passage:

> Being laid and dress'd for sleep, close not thy eyes
> Up with the curtains; give thy soul the wing
> In some good thoughts; so when the day shall rise
> And thou unrak'st thy fire, those sparks will bring
> New flames; besides where these lodge, vain heats mourn
> And die; that bush where God is shall not burn.

Vaughan's lines are not great poetry, but they contain a useful psychological hint.

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Psycho-Analysis and the Mysteries

It would be unwise to make a dogma of any of the present conclusions of psycho-analysis. As a means of examining the contents of the subconscious, psycho-analysis is an instrument of the highest value, but in the interpretation of what it finds there, and in the conclusions it draws as to their origin—how the apple

got into the dumpling, in fact—psycho-analysis requires to be checked by all the knowledge we have at our command. Mr. Mead has raised the question of origins, but it is just as easy to raise the question of interpretation. I am not satisfied that the interpretation placed by Jung on myths is any more than correct as far as it goes, and I am disposed to think that it does not go far enough. His reduction, for example, of a whole group of myths to the "incest" motive, appears to me, even in the light of his definition of incest as the "backward urge into childhood," to give us only a partial truth, an aspect of truth. For there is a sense in which an "urge into childhood" is not backward but forward, not a regression into an old, but a progression into a new childhood. "Unless ye become as little children, ye can in no wise enter the Kingdom of Heaven." "Incest" is a strictly improper term to apply to such a transformation; the new birth might suit the case better. Mr. Mead takes the same view. The interpretations of psycho-analysis carry us back, he suggests, to the lesser mysteries; but they need to be "elevated" in the Thomist sense in order to carry us back to the greater. So long as it confines itself to the "body" psycho-analysis must plainly be confined to the lesser mysteries, for the lesser mysteries are all concerned with generation. The greater mysteries are concerned with regeneration, and, hence, with the "soul"; and even if we assume the "soul" to require a body, we are outside the region of ordinary generation if that body is not the physical body. The psy-

cho-analytic interpretation suffers from this confinement of its text to the physical body, since "the genuine myth has first and foremost to do with the life of the soul."

Another caution to remember is that reality cannot be grasped with one faculty or with several; it requires them all. Only the whole can grasp the whole. For this reason it is impossible to "think" reality; for though the object of thought may be reality, all reality is not to be thought. Similarly, it is impossible to "feel" or to "will" or to "sense" reality completely. Each of these modes of experiencing reality reports us only a mode of reality, and not the whole of it. Before we can say certainly that a thing is true—before, that is, we can affirm a reality—it must not only think true, but feel true, sense true, and do true. The pragmatic criterion that reports a thing to be true because it works may be contradicted by the intellectual criterion that reports a thing to be true because it "thinks" true; and when these both agree in their report, their common conclusion may fail to be confirmed by the criterion of feeling that reports a thing to be true when it "feels" true. It is from an appreciation of the many-sided nature of truth, and, consequently from an appreciation of the many faculties required to grasp it, that the value set by the world on common sense is derived. For common sense is the community of the senses or faculties; in its outcome it is the agreement of their reports. A thing is said to be common sense when it satisfies the heart, the mind, the emotion, and all the senses; when,

in fact, it satisfies all our various criteria of reality. Otherwise a statement may be logical, it may be pleasing, it may be practical, it may be obvious; but only when it is all is it common sense.

But can we, with only our present faculties, however developed and harmonized, ever arrive at reality? It may be that in the natural order of things, humanity implies by definition a certain state of ignorance, and that this state is only to be transcended by the overpassing of the "human" condition. Psycho-analysis is still only at the beginning of its discoveries, but on the very threshold we are met by the problem of the nascent or germinal faculties of the mind. Are there in the subconscious "yearning to mix themselves with life," faculties for which "humanity" has not yet developed end-organs? If this be so, as our fathers have told us, the next step in evolution is to develop them.

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Gently with Psycho-Analysis

I am doubtful whether we have sufficiently developed the ideas of Psycho-analysis to make a fruitful parallel possible between them and the ideas contained in Patanjali. Psycho-analysis, as the name indicates, is more concerned with analysis than with synthesis, and "Yoga," whose dominant idea is re-union or synthesis, appears to be rather a complement than an analogue of Psycho-analysis in the broad sense. Take,

for example, the idea of Yoga as a means to the re-union of the individual with the world-soul: "Thou art That; Thou shalt become That." According to Jung, this attempt at re-union may be nothing more than a megalomaniac regressive introversion, representing on a grand scale a return to the mother and infantilism. Since it is separation from the mother (actual and metaphorical), that, in Jung's view, creates the basis of consciousness; any attempt to become re-united with the "mother" is an act of regression. It is obvious from this dissonance of doctrine that Yoga and Psycho-analysis have not as yet discovered any profound common ground; in fact, in some respects they appear to be opposed.

I count myself among the increasing number of enthusiastic students of psycho-analysis. It is the hopeful science of the dawning era. No new era appears to me to be possible without it, and such a work as Dr. Ernest Jones's *Psycho-Analysis* is one of the books most worth buying at the present time. But it is elsewhere that I find the best justification for my enthusiasm, in these words from an old Hermetic text: "The beginning of perfection is gnosis of man; but gnosis of God is perfected perfection." Psycho-analysis thus appears to be the beginning of the gnosis of man, and, in this sense, the beginning of perfection. But it is only the beginning. Mere morality, however psychological, is no substitute for religion; and the most profoundly and sincerely moral of men—Ibsen, for example—end in a state of despair unless at the point at which their morality gives out, religion

of some kind comes to their aid. Psycho-analysis, I think it will be found, is doomed, while it remains analysis, to end in the same state of despair. It will teach us all there is to be known about the nature of man; but the gnosis of man is not satisfying. For it is only thereafter and when man is transcended as an object of gnosis that perfected perfection is possible. I would not, however, hasten by a single impatient step this second and completing phase of the process of our learning. The gnosis of man is necessary to the gnosis of God, and God can well look after Himself and bide our time. Furthermore, a premature attempt to know God before we are initiated into the mysteries of the gnosis of man must be heavily paid for. Religion without humanity is more dangerous than humanity without religion. Let us then settle down with concentrated attention to the problem before us, the material and method of which are to be found in psycho-analysis. We shall be able to afford to whistle when we are through that wood.

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A Cambridge "Cocoon"

The new Cambridge magazine, *The Cocoon,* cannot be regarded as superfluous, the editors suggest, since its point of view is unique. It is not written by "theological" minds that "estimate affairs in relation to unchangeable dogmas and fixed beliefs," but by minds that hold that things "are capable of more than one

truthful interpretation." The second of these contentions is true enough, but, unfortunately, the new interpretations of *The Cocoon,* however truthful, are trivial. Age, we are told, sees the Moon as just a "heavenly body"; whereas the youth who spin *The Cocoon* see the Moon as "a wonderful cheese" or a prehistoric coin. Age, again, looks at the Great Pyramid and interprets it as a pyramidal structure; but our spinning youth interpret it as a "colossal and awe-inspiring cube," with emphasis on the awe. The difference between the interpretations is, to my mind, all in favour of age. It may be true that the Moon is translatable in terms of cheese, and the Great Pyramid may really be a cube, but the interpretations are without interest or value. If *The Cocoon* had said that the Moon might conceivably be the Devil, or the Great Pyramids the psychic meeting-place of the Rosicrucians, the new "interpretation" might have had some interest. As it is, we are back in the nursery, and not by any means in the nursery of the race. The earlier editorial affirmation is not even sense, but a contradiction of sense. "To estimate affairs in relation to unchangeable dogmas and fixity of things as they are." When we find only means of estimating at all. Things *are* so and so, and the unchangeability of dogma and fixity of belief are determined, or should be, by the corresponding unchangeability and fixity of things as they are. When we find that the nature of things changes arbitrarily from day to day, we may consider the advisability of changing our belief that it is fixed as rapidly as nature itself is transformed.

Otherwise, if anything we say is to be "true," it must be because there is a fixed and unchangeable nature to which our dogmas and beliefs refer. The alternative is not youth and imagination and "other truthful interpretations of things," it is nursery chatter about cheese and pyramidal cubes.

Pass the articles on Balzac and D'Annunzio, both of which might have been written by Old Age or even Middle Age, and let us see how the state of mind calling itself Youth deal with history. Remember that Cambridge, where the Cocoons come from, regards itself as "the nursery of the nation"; and then listen to Mr. L. J. Cheney, no doubt one of our future representatives on the World-League, preparing his program. "It is stupid," he says, "to write history or to study history on the assumption that we Western Europeans are the salt of the earth." And Mr. H. Y. Oulsham, on the same subject, remarks that "we must keep the sociological aim of history in sight"; . . . "the be-all and end-all of history is sociology." No wonder the *Manchester Guardian*—the guardian, that is to say, of Manchester—found *The Cocoon* so promising, for the opinions expressed by Mr. Cheney and Mr. Oulsham are embryos of *Manchester Guardian* "leaders," they are *so* cosmopolitan and *so* humanitarian. Apart, however, from their extreme Age, bordering on decrepitude, I find in them not even an unimportant "truthful interpretation." It is not true that sociology is the be-all and end-all of history as it ought to be written; and to deny, in the name of history, that Western Europe *is* the salt

of the earth (however it may have lost its savour) is just to deny and repudiate European world-responsibility. Things, again, *are* so and so, and not otherwise, let Youth interpret them as it will. Europe *is* the responsible mind of the world, and the be-all and end-all of history is the fulfilment of a world-purpose whose objective is more than merely human sociology. If the "nursery of the nation" has a different interpretation, the nursery of the nation is wrong.

The Cocoon is under the impression that there is something valuable in Youth in years; that Youth in years is the only kind of Youth; that Youth in years is Youth indeed. Our first birth, however, is only a sleep and a forgetting, and real Youth comes only after the second-birth. The once-born are creatures of pure circumstance, owing their youth to the accident of time alone; but the twice-born are self-creations defying time; they never grow old, though they are always growing up. *The Cocoon* fairly describes Youth as "a condition of energy and receptiveness"; but is Youth in years necessarily of that kind? As for receptiveness, we have already seen that the "historians" of the "nursery of the nation" either hark back or hark forward to ideas long since dead. And as for "energy," barring its animal manifestation in sport, the highest culture demands the highest concentration of energy, and where shall we find it but in the twice-born? Whoever can make a turn upon himself and his habits of thought is young, whatever his years. On the other hand, whoever cannot be

"bothered" to think afresh, but contents himself with what he used to think is old and lacking in energy, whatever his years or his blues.

It is the fate of the once-born to become pessimistic as they grow old, as it is the privilege of the twice-born to increase in hope as they wax in youth. One of our Cocoonists, therefore, must be prematurely old in the former sense, since he lifts up his lamentation that "the beauty of English prose is already mainly a thing of the past." It is not a sentiment for "the nursery of the nation," and it is altogether untrue. Beautiful English prose has certainly been written, but the best is yet to be. Beautiful qualities of English prose we have certainly had revealed to us in abundance, and some of our greatest writers have succeeded in making an anthology in their style of two or three or even four of them; but an English prose with all its known qualities harmonized and synthesized in a single style is a thing of the future and not of the past. There are qualities in English still unrevealed. A great deal of "energy," however, will be necessary to such a synthesis. Its creator must be not only twice-born, but, as the *Mahabharata* says of Indian sages, "blazing with spiritual energy," for the fire of imagination to fuse all the qualities of English prose into a style is too intense for ordinary mortals.

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An Oxford Miscellany

A Queen's College Miscellany is filially dedicated to Walter Pater and Ernest Dowson, both of whom, it seems, were Queen's men in their day. Still another association with these writers is sought in the comparison of the college coterie from which each arose with the group responsible for the present miscellany. Something of the nature of a cult is indicated; and I take it that the various items of the miscellany are "corporate" as well as individual. The fore-word says as much. In a vocabulary that seems most ominous for literature, we are referred to a "literary team" whose "output" is here presented, and to an attempt to "prove that team-work is possible in prose and poetry." And the miscellany is the first "harvest" of "the refined product." My opinion of "team-work" is certainly that it is possible both in prose and poetry. No individual has ever by himself written either great prose or great poetry, and the greatest literary works of the world, not excepting Shakespeare, are of anonymous—that is to say, of collective—authorship. The elevation of the group-consciousness, however, is everything, and I need not remark that a group whose highest aim is to emulate Pater and Dowson, and whose considered "foreword" contains such terminological ineptitudes as "team-work," "output," and the "harvest" of a "refined product," is not yet upon a very high plane of discourse.

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The Impotence of Satire

A correspondent has made the admirable suggestion that a new *Don Quixote* be written to slay the dragon of Capitalism with the pen of satire. The suggestion is unconditionally free; no acknowledgment of its source need be made; but anybody is at liberty to begin on the work at once. Some excellent arguments are adduced why the work should be undertaken. Capitalism has long troubled the land, and its evils are generally admitted. Reason has failed to make any impression on the beast, and sentiment appears almost to be its favourite food. Satire, therefore, is plainly indicated as the appropriate weapon, and at its crack, my correspondent suggests, the beast would dissolve into nothing amidst universal laughter. What more need be said but "Cervantes, forward!"?

Unfortunately my correspondent proceeds to weaken his appeal by affirming that Cervantes himself had Capitalism in his mind when writing certain chapters of the First Book of *Don Quixote*. In 44 and 45 it appears to me, he says, that Don Quixote's identity as a capitalist is undoubted. Sancho Panza's identity with the mass of Labour is equally undoubted; and the middle classes are represented by a number of ladies and gentlemen, a canon, a judge, and a doctor. These chapters standing by themselves would be a good allegorical explanation of the present financial position. But why of the "present" position, if satire

is capable of dissolving Capitalism in laughter? Without questioning the allegorical character of the chapters referred to, they may, for all I dare say, be a perfect anticipation of the economics of Douglas—it is not encouraging to our present-day Cervantes to be told that their proposed method has already been tried by a master only to leave the dragon of Capitalism still to be tickled to death. Now one comes to think of it, not even Chivalry, an even more undoubted object than Capitalism of Cervantes's satire, really died of the shock for the very good reason that it was dead before Cervantes rained his laughter upon it. Even Cervantes's satire killed nothing, and the task to be undertaken for my correspondent is therefore greater than Cervantes's. In the spirit of Squeers, I can only suggest that he who spells window, w-i-n-d-e-r, should clean it. My correspondent, forward!

The power of satire is usually much exaggerated; as a matter of fact, it is one of the least effective of psychological weapons. Almost anything can turn its edge. Juvenal is not reported to have done much more than incur the dislike of his contemporaries; and Swift, the most serious satirist since Juvenal, never effected anything but satire alone. His two most immediately effective pamphlets, the *Drapier's Letters,* and the *Conduct of the Allies,* contained passages of satire, irony, and every other sort of appeal, but neither of them can be called satirical as a whole. Satire, like wit, is effective in small doses given at opportune moments; but, as in the case of wit, sustained

satire defeats its own object. It owes what power it wields to the contrast in which it stands to the prevailing mood of the work in which it appears: its unexpected appearance therein. Surprise is the condition of its doing any work at all. Surely if this were not the case the satirical journals of, let us say, Germany or France, would have dissolved in laughter the vices aimed at long before now. But satire is expected of them, is discounted in advance, and positively adds to the attractiveness of the objects satirized. I will not go so far as to say that Cervantes recalled dead Chivalry to life by satirizing it, though the crop of romances that followed *Don Quixote* in England may almost be said to justify the charge; but it can safely be said that a satire directed against Capitalism would lengthen rather than contract the life of the dragon, by adding amusement to its claims to exist.

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The "Dial" of America

The American *Dial* is perhaps the most fully realized of all the promising literary magazines now current in the world. It is in all probability considerably in advance of the American reading public for whom it is intended, but it is all the better on that account. Culture is always called upon to sacrifice popularity, and, usually, even its existence, in the interests of civilization; for civilization is the child of

culture, and has in general as little consideration for culture as a human child for its own education. The custodians of culture (or the disinterested pursuit of human perfection) are the adults of the race of which civilization is the children's school: and, fortunately or unfortunately, in these democratic days, their function is largely under the control of their pupils. Gone are the times when a Brahmanic caste can lay down and enforce a curriculum of education for its civilization. Modern civilizations believe themselves to be, and possibly are, "old enough" to exercise their right of selecting their teachers. It cannot be said, as yet, that they exercise their choice with remarkable discretion, but the process of popular self-education, if slow, may at any rate be expected to be sure. In any event there is no use in kicking against the stars. If the forces of culture are to rule modern civilizations, they must do so constitutionally. The days of the dictatorship of the intelligentia are past.

There are two kinds of judgment which it is essential for civilization to acquire: judgment of men and judgment of things. Things are of primary importance, but so also are persons. One is not before or after the other. For instance, culture itself is a "thing" in the philosophic sense; it is a reality in the world of ideas; but of quite equal importance in our mixed world of ideas and individuals, are the actual persons and personalities claiming to embody and direct culture. Hence the transcendent importance of criticism next to creation in both spheres: criticism of personalities and criticism of "works." The mis-

taking of a little man for a great man, or the reverse, may easily mean the delay of the work of culture for whole generations. And, equally, the confusion of the objects of culture with the objects of civilization may spell the ruin of a nation. Few critics realize the magnitude and responsibility of their function, or the degree to which personal disinterestedness is indispensable to its fulfilment. Holding the office of inspectors of the munitions of culture, they are often guilty of "passing" contraband upon the public, and, still more often, of failing to ensure delivery of Culture's most effective weapons. More seriousness is needed, very much more, in matters of criticism. We must be capable of killing if we are to be capable of giving life.

The *Dial* is particularly to be praised for its courageous criticism of great dead Americans. America, like Europe, suffers from necrophily, a kind of worship of the dead. Indeed, as a good Injun was synonymous with a dead Injun, a great American writer is usually a dead American writer. All his faults die with him, and only his myth remains, with the result that people who would not have acknowledged the existence of, let us say, Whitman living, will not acknowledge a fault in Whitman dead. For a nation thus under a critical statue of Mortmain, the utterance of what seems like blasphemy is a necessary part of their education. They must know that the dead great, by very virtue of their greatness and the survival of their works, are still alive and active, and that the same kind of criticism must be kept playing on them

as upon the living forces. The *Dial* reviewers show no disposition to shirk this unpleasing duty. One by one, as the occasion suggests, the dead great are given the honour of living criticism, and treated as the immortal present which they are. Since their spirits go marching on, criticism must go marching along with them.

One of the recently so honoured dead in the pages of the *Dial* has been Whitman; and in an essay on *Whitman's Love Affairs* Mr. Emery Holloway throws a fresh light on an old but still obscure subject. His "love affairs" were obviously more matter for criticism in Whitman than in some other writers, since Whitman was pre-eminently an autobiographical writer who sang himself. What, then, does Mr. Holloway find? A little surprisingly—at least to readers who have not already divined Whitman's secret—that Whitman "suffered" from love, and struggled against it rather as a raw tyro than as the "master of himself" of his poetic fiction. In some private diaries of Whitman, quoted by Mr. Holloway, we are presented with the spectacle of Whitman grappling with his own soul after the manner of saints mortifying the flesh, or, as I would suggest, after the distinctively modern fashion. Instinct was at war with reason, even in Whitman, and, in the end, as usually occurs with modern men, it was reason that won. Mr. Holloway divides Whitman's works between two periods: the first, in which he sang "untrammelled natural impulses"; and a second, in which he was concerned about democracy and the immortality of the soul; in short,

with reason. And between these two periods, or worlds of discourse, Mr. Holloway tells us, was a purgatory, in which Whitman's soul was tried as by fire. The diaries already mentioned contain some of the records of Whitman's conflict with himself. Here, for example, is an entry bearing all the marks of a painful resolution. "I must," he says, "pursue her no more" . . . and resolve "to give up absolutely and for good, from this present hour, the feverish, fluctuating, useless, undignified pursuit of 164 . . . avoid seeing her or any meeting whatever from this hour forth, for life." The reader is to be pitied who does not understand, however dimly, what Whitman must have gone through in imagination and reality to confide to the author of *Leaves of Grass* such a shocking confession. He emerged from the experience with that past behind him, but still, I think, unresolved. For it was not his to reconcile instinct with reason in an epigenesis; he passed from one phase to the next without carrying his sheaves with him. From being within sight of real greatness, he declined to the stature of a great American.

Following its faithful treatment of the Whitman myth, the *Dial* examines the case of Mark Twain. It is undoubtedly a pathological case, and not only Mark Twain but America was the victim in it. A nation suffers the fate of its great men; as is their odyssey so is the odyssey of the nation to which they belong. Does a great man in any nation become corrupt; does he succumb to falsehood and to the morality of the herd? Even so his nation is on the

downward path. On the other hand, does he maintain his integrity, even though his life should pay for it? There is a sign that his nation also will battle through. From this point of view, Mark Twain presents the spectacle both of a tragedy and a portent. Nobody can read his works without realizing the essential truthfulness of the man, his marvellous capacity for intellectual honesty, his unerring perception of the norm of things. Mark Twain, permitted and encouraged to pass free judgment upon American and human life, might have been one of the cultural forces of the new world; he was one of God's best gifts to America. We know, however, what America did for Mark Twain; it slowly but surely emasculated him in the supposed interests of the female (not the feminine) in the American soul. Under the influence of his wife who, as he said, not only "edited everything I wrote, but edited me," under the similar influence of all that was bourgeois in America—Mark Twain consented to "make fun" of everything he held dear. Talents and powers which it is spiritual death to trade, Mark Twain prostituted for the amusement of a people whose deepest need was high seriousness. As Mr. Lovett says, Mark Twain "flattered a country without art, letters, beauty or standards to laugh at these things." The judgment is severe, but it is just; and Mark Twain, I believe, would be the first to acquiesce in it.

That he preserved, in the back of his mind, his spiritual vision and knowledge, there can be no doubt. He sinned not only against the light, but in the light.

One or two revealing phases in his works have escaped the censorship of the female American he married. "In our country," he said, "we have three unspeakably precious things: freedom of thought, freedom of speech, and the prudence never to practise either." It must be admitted that this is a "snag" in the smooth current of a work of amusement; it betokened the existence of depths and danger. But it is nothing to the remarks let off in conversation on the rare occasions when the censor was absent. "I've a good mind," he once said to a friend, "to blow the gaff on the whole damned human race." It is tragedy, indeed, that he never did. We have the gaff blown on us all too seldom, and usually by men whose idiosyncrasies and abnormalities allow us to ignore them. Mark Twain was such a normal man that his blowing of the gaff could not possibly have been attributed to a neurotic complex derived from infantile suppression: it would have been the judgment of man upon Man. His failure to bestow this inestimable gift upon America and the world we owe to America, and if, as I have said, a nation suffers the fate of its great men, we may be sure that America will pay for it.

***

America Regressing

Just when we in Europe were beginning to envy America her promise, contrasting it with the winter of our own discontent, "the authorities" (as one might

say the furies, the parcae or the weird sisters) have descended upon our unfortunate but deserving friend, the *Little Review,* and suspended its mail service on account of its publication of a chapter of Mr. James Joyce's new novel, *Ulysses.* That such an absurd act of puritanic spleen should be possible after and before years of world-war is evidence that spiritual meanness is hard to transcend; and it confirms the justice or, at least, the apprehension expressed in Mr. Ezra Pound's *bon mot* that the U. S. A. should be renamed the Y. M. C. A. Not only is the *Little Review* perfectly harmless: would to heaven, indeed, that it were, or could be otherwise, for never can any good be done by something incapable of doing harm; but the *Ulysses* of Mr. James Joyce is one of the most interesting symptoms in the present literary world, and its publication is very nearly a public obligation. Such sincerity, such energy, such fearlessness as Mr. Joyce's are rare in any epoch, and most of all in our own, and on that very account they demand to be given at least the freedom of the Press. What the giant America can fear from Mr. Joyce or from his publication in the *Little Review* passes understanding. Abounding in every variety of crime and stupidity as America is, even if *Ulysses* were a literary crime committed in a journal of the largest circulation, one more or less could not make much difference to America. But *Ulysses* is no crime; but a noble experiment; and its suppression will sadden the virtuous at the same time that it gratifies the base. America, we may be sure, is not going to "get culture" by stamping upon

every germ of new life. America's present degree of cultural toleration may ensure a herb-garden, but not a flower will grow upon the soil of Comstock.

Among the scores of interesting experiments in composition and style exhibited in *Ulysses,* not the least novel is Mr. Joyce's attempt to develop a theory of harmonics in language. By compounding nouns with adjectives and adjectives with adverbs, Mr. Joyce tries to convey to the reader a complex of qualities or ideas simultaneously instead of successively. "Eglintoneyes looked up skybrightly." In such a sentence agglutination has been carried beyond the ordinary level of particles into the plane of words, and the effect is to present a multitude of images as if they were one. Thus "a new and complex knowledge of self" finds its "appropriate medium of expression in terms of art." I am not so sure that Mr. Joyce has not carried the experiment too far, but this, again, is a virtue rather than a defect in a pioneer. Moreover, the world needs a few studio-magazines like the *Little Review,* and a few studio writers like Mr. James Joyce. What does it matter if, in his enthusiasm, Mr. Joyce travels beyond the limits of good taste, beyond, that is, the already cultivated, if only a single new literary convention is thereby brought into common use?

***

The Best is Yet to Be

"One dreams of a prose," says *The Times Literary Supplement,* "that has never yet been written in English, though the language is made for it and there are minds not incapable of it, a prose dealing with the greatest things quietly and justly as men deal with them in their secret meditations . . . the English Plato is still to be." Alas, however, that *The Times* should be just a little misled, for the "quiet" of meditation is not the real genius of the English language, and the emphasis in the phrase, "English Plato," should be on the word English. Greek Plato translated into English would not give us what we are seeking. What we need is Plato's mind. It is characteristic however, this demand for quiet, or, rather, quietism, in *The Times Literary Supplement,* since, on the whole, the *Supplement* is about the deadest mouse in the world of journalism. Above all, it is suggested, writers must keep their voices low, speak in whispers, even, perhaps, a little under their breath as if in meditation, in case—well, in case of what? Is there not a *hush* in the *Literary Supplement* which is not the hush of reverence for literature, but of fear and prudence?

Our writer observes very acutely that prose is usually thought greatest when it is nearest poetry, and he properly dissents from this common opinion. Prose, we should say, can only be great as it differs from poetry, and the greatest prose is furthest away

from poetry. And the difference, we are told, is the difference between love and justice. The cardinal virtue of poetry, he says, is love, while the cardinal virtue of prose is justice. May we not rather say that the difference is one of plane of consciousness, prose being at the highest level of the rational mind, and poetry at the highest level of the spiritual mind? Yes, but then, in all probability, *The Times* would regard us as fanciful, for note, anything *exact* about spiritual things is likely to be dismissed by the *Literary Supplement* as fanciful and dangerous. Again, "prose is the achievement of civilization"; in other words, it is the norm of social life. True, but let me add that it is the register of Culture, marking the degree to which Culture has affected its surrounding civilization. Prose without poetry is impossible, and the greatest prose presupposes the culture of the greatest poetry, for the "justice" of prose is only the "love" of poetry *with seeing eyes*. Finally, we must agree with our essayist when he quotes with approval the excellent observation of Mr. Sturge Moore that "simplicity *may* be a form of decadence." Simplicity is a sign of decadence when it sacrifices profundity of thought to simplicity of expression—as in the classical case of Voltaire, who positively dared not think deeply lest he should be unable to write clearly, clarity of expression being more to him (and often to the French genius generally) than depth of thought. And writers like Mr. Clutton Brock are just as certainly symptoms of the decadence of simplicity in our own time and place. On the other hand, I still dream of a pro-

found simplicity, the style of which is transparent over depths; and in this, if no English writer has ever been a master, Lao Tse is the world's model, at least in fragments. We must learn to distinguish between a puerile and a virile simplicity, between innocence and virtue; and perhaps the first exercise in such judgment should be to put the *Literary Supplement* in its proper place.

This brings us back to quietism and the question whether the perfect English prose would deal with the highest things in the spirit of man's secret meditations. I do more than doubt it. Secret meditation is incommunicably secret; it is thought without words, and disposed to poetry rather than prose. I suspect our writer really means rumination, in which case, however, he is no better off. For the genius of the language does not run easily in reverie, it is a language that loves action and life. It has few cloistered virtues, and to employ it for cloistered thought would be to use only one or two of its many stops, and those not the most characteristic. Lastly, I cannot but think that the choice of "quietism" as the aim of perfect English prose is a sign of decadence, for it indicates the will to retire into oneself, and to cease to "act" by means of words. The scene it calls up is familiar and bourgeois: a small circle of "cultured" men week-ending in a luxurious country house and confessing "intimately" their literary weaknesses. It is the prevalent atmosphere of the *Literary Supplement* and the *Spectator*. It is essential that there be "equality" between them, that none should presume

to wish to inspire another to any "new way of life," that action, in short, should be excluded. Once granted these conditions of sterility, and the perfect prose, we are told, would emerge.

The rest of us, however, have a very different conception of the perfect English prose. The perfect English prose will be anything but a sedative after a full meal of action. It will be not only action itself, but the cause of action, and its deliberate aim will be to intensify and refine action and to raise action to the level of a fine art. Anything less than a real effect upon real people in a real world is beneath the dignity even of common prose. The very "leaders" in the penny journals aim at leaving a mark upon events. Is the perfect prose to be without hope of posterity? On second thoughts, I shall withdraw Plato from the position of model in which I put him. Plato, it is evident, is likely to be abused; without intending it, his mood, translated into English, appears to be compatible only with luxurious ease; he is read by modern Epicureans. And I shall put in Plato's place Demosthenes, the model of Swift, the greatest English writer the world has yet seen. Yes, Demosthenes let it be, since Plato is being used for balsam. We seek an English Demosthenes.

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